



T.O.D. Johnston

A Layman's
Commentary on Paul's
Epistles, Volume 3

Galatians through Philemon

T.O.D. Johnston's A Layman's Commentary on the Epistles of Paul -
Galatians through Philemon

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T.O.D. Johnston's Commentary on the Epistles of Paul

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A Layman's Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle
Volume 3 - Galatians through Philemon

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Written by T.O.D. Johnston

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T.O.D. Johnston's Commentary on Corinthians
Preface

After reading many scholarly commentaries on different books of Scripture, it became my mental habit to sift through the minute discussions of individual words and/or phrases, and the quoting of various scholars of the past of many differing opinions, and center on the most logical and inspirational truths that remained. Thus I relied on the studied scholarship of those who had learned the original languages and had read all the previous scholars that had written to get the best possible understanding of Scripture that I, as a non-scholar, could. It seemed that most church members would not attempt to read scholarly works - but would benefit from their knowledge if presented in a plain and straightforward manner, the truths they had perceived. The following commentary is my attempt to do this. May God bless my efforts to the extent that they increase the understanding and faith of the reader.

T.O.D. Johnston
2005

Galatians - Lesson I

The setting of this epistle describes the situation of the beginning church. The apostles and majority of disciples were Jews, including Paul himself. As the Gospel was spreading out and among Gentiles there were some believers formerly Jewish (called Judaizers) that continued to demand circumcision of converts to Christ. This pretty much ceased after the destruction of Israel as a nation by Titus in 70 A.D. In the churches of Galatia some of these Jews had been trying, with some success, to convince these believers that their instruction had been imperfect and incomplete.

They claimed authority of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. This undermined Paul's ministry among the Gentile churches and called into question the authority and fidelity of his conversion. It also denied that he had met with the apostles in Jerusalem over the very issue and they had agreed with what he had been preaching among the Gentiles, which maintained their liberty from the rites and laws of the Jewish religion. This liberty was also true for Jewish converts, that they also are justified by faith through Christ and no longer under the Law (as by works to earn salvation). Paul also mentions his confrontation with Peter at Jerusalem and the importance and result.

Galatia was a part of ancient Phrygia, in Asia Minor. At this time, it was a Roman colony with an appointed governor (propraetor). To the east is Cappadocia, to the west, Bithynia, to the south Pamphylia, on the north by the Euxine Sea. The Acts mention Paul visiting this area twice (6:6 about 53 A.D., 18:23 about 56 A.D.) It is generally accepted that Paul was the first to preach the Gospel in that area (Galatians 1:6, 4:13). Among those converted were Jews that continued to observe the Jewish laws. After Paul's departure, these Judaizers sought to impose their practices on all converts to Christianity, thus Paul's concern expressed in this epistle.

This issue had to be settled and put behind them, as well as in all the other churches. Justification is by faith alone, not by works. Christians are called upon to do everything as unto God's glory, and the benefit of the brethren.

Chapter 1. Paul's Unique Call to Be Apostle to the Gentiles

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

2 and all the brethren which are with me.

¶ Unto the churches of Galatia:

3 ¶ Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

There Is No Other Gospel

6 ¶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel

Galatians - Lesson I continued

unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 ¶ For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Paul's Ministry of the True Gospel

11 ¶ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 ¶ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21 Afterward I came into the regions of Syria and Cili'cia;

22 and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ:

23 but they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

Verse 1.

Paul was called by Jesus Christ in person, as from the Father who raised Him from the dead, to preach especially to the Gentiles as was always in God's plan. (Acts 22:14,15.) No human being or organization had any part in it.

Verse 2.

This message includes the love and concern of all Paul's fellow laborers in the Gospel (the brethren). This is addressed to all groups of believers (churches) of this geographical area, all judged to be in the same general situation.

Verse 3.

The most favored Christian greeting: grace and peace from the Father and the Son. The most blessed things that God offers and

Galatians - Lesson I continued

freely gives to those that believe.

Verse 4.

This was made possible by the gift of Christ's sacrifice for our sins, as according to God's will and plan. The purpose - to "deliver us from this present evil world". This includes all distracting and destructive influences being recognized and rejected. The rites and works of the Jewish religion are in this category. All were fulfilled in and by Jesus, according to God's will.

Verse 5.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Verse 6.

Paul expresses his surprise that these believers have so soon put aside the doctrine of Grace and taken up another 'gospel'. This from the influences of certain people's ideas, most specifically the works of the Jewish law. It is not accurately 'another gospel' but a perverse teaching, though those that teach it claim they know and practice the truth.

Verse 7.

These people call their opinion an alternative, which it is not. It is not 'good news' of forgiveness but a burden of works, which perverts the grace and peace of the Gospel of Christ.

Verse 8.

The Gospel that Paul preached to them was and remains the true and only one. They must stand in it, and judge any other as false. And this even if Paul, himself, or an angel from heaven, or any other person preach any other, 'let him be accursed.' Some false teachers of the time claimed some private message from an angel. They will be cursed of God and must be avoided. These people add to or take away from the true message of God's revelation to men through His Son.

Verse 9.

To make certain of the seriousness of this stand, Paul reemphasized the threat and serious danger of turning from the true Gospel the first received. Any such person must be disregarded, and not allowed in the church. That person is accursed. To not reject such a person and their doctrine risks their (the church members) own degradation and participating in the accompanying curse from God.

Verse 10.

Paul refers to the only two motives possible for his actions. To please or persuade men or God. At one time he did seek to please men as a persecutor of the Christians. If he was still doing that, he would not be serving Christ.

Verse 11.

It is now certain and final that the Gospel that he preached to them had no human author or doctrine.

Galatians - Lesson I continued

Verse 12.

No man told or taught him this message. Christ revealed it to him after His death and resurrection.

Verse 13.

He assumes that they have heard the story of his earlier life as a devout Jew who zealously persecuted the Church (Acts 9:1,2; 22:4). The Jews he is addressing are those who would have heard this. He is describing this former zeal he had as being 'beyond measure' and destructive.

Verse 14.

He also considered himself as more dedicated in speech and action according to the traditions of the fathers (a pharisee) than the great majority of his Jewish contemporaries.

Verse 15.

Paul here acknowledges God as Creator of all life in the universe and his own in particular. God's plan for his life started with his conception and birth, then his rebirth in God's calling him by His grace, changing him from persecutor to preacher.

Verse 16.

God's purpose was for Paul to know His Son, Jesus Christ - the risen Savior - and spread His Gospel among the Gentiles, the heathen. Paul was immediately and completely convinced of his calling, so, there remained no reason to confer with any human being.

Verse 17.

He also saw no reason to go up to Jerusalem and confer or seek approval of the apostles, for the same reason. When the majority of believers had scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, the apostles were left unmolested in Jerusalem during this time (Acts 3:1). Paul continued his journey into Arabia near Damascus, where he later returned. Since Luke was not with him at this time, there is no mention of this journey in Acts.

Verse 18.

A period of 3 years passed, and then Paul went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter, and stayed with him 15 days. Unfortunately for us, there is no record of their conversations. Paul was accepted as an equal in the Lord.

Verse 19.

Among the apostles, Paul only saw James, the Lord's brother. James, the brother of John, had been killed (Acts 12:2) much earlier.

Verse 20.

Paul's point was that he went, not to learn the Gospel or seek approval or a commission from the assembly of apostles there. God is his witness to this true account.

Galatians - Lesson I continued

Verse 21.

From Jerusalem, Paul journeyed to Syria and Cilicia (Acts 9:30).

Verse 22.

Paul had no acquaintance and was not known by any of the Churches in Judea. They had never seen his face.

Verse 23.

All they knew about him was that he had formerly been persecuting Christians and seeking their destruction, and now he was preaching that faith. Obviously this was such an unexpected and dramatic about face that it was widely spoken of.

Verse 24.

The also obvious and correct credit for this change was what God had done in him. God alone deserved the credit and was glorified for this.

A great deal of Paul's concern is to make clear that this call, his commission, his conversation, his every action is from God and not from any human being, group, or worldly concern. He is God's servant alone. He knew the danger of mixing the two - trying to please both God and man always leads to destruction.

Next, Paul relates his much later trip to Jerusalem and what took place in meeting with the apostles.

Galatians - Lesson II

Galatians chapter 2.

1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

4 and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5 to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6 But of those who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

7 but contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;)

9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Paul Rebukes Peter at Antioch

11 ¶ But when Peter was come to An'ti-och, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Galatians - Lesson II continued

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Verse 1.

The 14 years mentioned were from Paul's conversion (33 A.D.), his visit with Peter (36 A.D.) and the council of Jerusalem (52 A.D.). This chronology is also recorded by Luke in Acts (11:30). Barnabas and Titus also were with Paul on this trip.

Verse 2.

That he went up by revelation could mean that he was directed by God to go at this particular time, or that he felt duty-bound to explain that his call to preach Christ among the Gentiles, and that the Jerusalem leaders would understand and accept his ministry as a genuine work of God in the spreading of the Gospel of His Son. He met with the most eminent men 'privately'. In this way, his direct testimony would be heard without interruption, as opposed to a mixed gathering where opinion and rumors, and spurious questions would cause only disputing and confusion. This could make it appear that Paul's ministry was not truly spiritual, but vain. This must be avoided.

Verse 3.

After meeting with these apostles, the result was acceptance of Paul's ministry to the point that they didn't insist on circumcision of the Gentile converts, but also did not require Paul's present companion, Titus (a Greek), to be circumcised.

Verse 4.

The problem was that some of the Judaizers were present in the assembly 'to spy out our liberty' in the Gospel preached to the Gentiles. Their purpose was to better plan ways to oppose him, to require all converts to be circumcised and follow the Law. Paul labels this as being brought into bondage, reverting to salvation by works, thus subverting the free gift of God in Christ. This must be avoided, period.

Verse 5.

At no time did he give in - 'no, not for an hour.' His ministry was from God, blessed by God, and true as he preached it to the Gentiles. Therefore, they may continue in that truth, and they are equally Christians with the Jews, without the Jewish law.

Verse 6.

In the conferences with those 'who seemed to be somewhat' describes persons of the best reputation and maturity. Paul felt equal to them. They could not add anything to his account of his

Galatians - Lesson II continued

ministry. God accepts no person according to any worldly value or accomplishment.

Verse 7.

They clearly understood the difference: the gospel of the uncircumcision, God had given to Paul and blessed his ministry; just as the Gospel of the circumcision (to the Jews) was Peter's ministry.

Verse 8.

The work of God was effectual in Peter and in Paul, even though with different groups: Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 9.

James, Cephas, and John are called pillars, or those most eminent and recognized leaders of the Jerusalem church. They perceived the grace that God had given Paul. As a natural result, they gave him and Barnabas the 'right hands of fellowship' to proceed with their blessing to continue their ministry to the heathen, even as they would to the Jews.

Verse 10.

The only thing they did suggest was to remember the poor, which Paul had also previously wanted to do.

Verse 11.

Peter came to Antioch while Paul was there. When this happened is not mentioned. It is generally thought that this was after the Jerusalem council with Paul. Peter did something that Paul had to call him on. Apparently, Peter had acted on his conviction that faith in Christ did not require Gentiles to follow Jewish Law, in this particular instance, concerning food. He had been observed with Gentiles, even eating with them. Then certain Jews came from James (who apparently still insisted on following the Law) and Peter reacted to their coming by separating himself from the Gentiles. Knowing their prejudice, he thereby wanted to avoid the criticism and controversy.

Verse 13.

Other Jewish believers, for the same fear, followed Peter's example after he took this action. This behavior also strongly caused Barnabas to follow their example in following Jewish Law and reject the Gentiles and their freedom in the Gospel - thus their inequality.

Verse 14.

This was wrong for them to do - 'they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel'. In one of their assemblies, Paul stood before the group, and called Peter on being a Jew that lived after the manner of Gentiles. He had not required that these believers to live as Jews, but he had changed his mind and sought to compel them to now do as the Jews.

Verse 15.

The point, put simply, identifies the two opposite sides. Jews,

Galatians - Lesson II continued

by nature, include those born in Israel, of Jewish parents, and brought up in their religious traditions. The other side includes the sinners of the Gentiles who had no acquaintance or knowledge of the true God but lived as idolaters and in spiritual darkness.

Verse 16.

No matter what order you put it in, the facts remain the same: no man is justified by the works of the Law. No man is able to perform it perfectly. Justification before God only comes by faith in Jesus Christ - 'for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.'

Verse 17.

Those justified by faith in Christ are still sinners and still unable to fulfill all righteousness. The criticism put forth is that believers can then do whatever they want, and Christ is blamed, as if He condoned such sinning. God forbids such a false position. Believers are joined to Christ - a new creation, no longer under the power of sin and empowered to follow Christ in word and deed, to bring glory to God.

Verse 18.

To go back to observing the law so obviously opens up the criticism that Christ and His sacrifice on the cross was not enough, and that believers still have to work according to the Law for salvation. This is wrong; to do this, Paul would make himself a transgressor. This was also the danger that Paul observed in Peter's actions at Antioch.

Verse 19.

To carefully consider all the requirements of the law, everyone must accept the fact that there is no possibility or hope to perfectly fulfill every part. The penalty is death. The only way of escape is to accept the Gospel in faith, and its salvation from death unto life as a child of God.

Verse 20.

Christ fulfilled the law and yet was put to death to pay the price for mankind's sins. He took upon Himself the requirements of the law so that no one was still condemned to death by the law, if they accepted His substitutionary death. And yet, the believer is dead to the law, but alive in the flesh with Christ's Spirit within and an eternal destination with God. Paul now lives by faith in the Son of God, Who loved him and gave Himself for him. God provided through His Son, that which no human did or ever could do.

Verse 21.

It is only by the grace of God - His free gift. To say or do anything contrary would be to frustrate or deny that grace. Paul writes - 'I do not frustrate the grace of God'. Anyone who claims that observance of the law can save us, must also judge Christ's death as pointless. '...for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.'

Galatians - Lesson II continued

To believe that is to deny the changed nature of a Christian, who is seeking and maturing in actions and conversation to become more like Jesus, and living for God's glory, not our own.

A most important question: what was the condition of the world before Christ? And one that follows from that: what would it be like if Christianity was removed? The answers begin to show the reality of its unique blessings, provided for man by God through the gift of life and love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Its truth and purity must be maintained.

In Chapter 3, Paul continues his absolute certainty of justification by faith alone.

Galatians - Lesson III

Galatians chapter 3. Further proof of justification by faith alone.

The Spirit Received through Faith

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

God's Covenant with Abraham

6 ¶ Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

10 ¶ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written,

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

15 ¶ Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Galatians - Lesson III continued

The Purpose of the Law

19 ¶ Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 ¶ Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 ¶ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Verse 1.

Paul calls these believers 'foolish' because it seems like somehow they have been enticed, or drawn away from the truth, in the Gospel of the crucified Christ. They had received this Gospel. Now they put aside their good sense and sight, and have chosen to be blind and without reason.

Verse 2.

They must look back, when they received the Holy Spirit. Did they receive it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?

Verse 3.

They are foolish if they would put aside the free gift of Salvation, the Spirit of adoption as a child of God, and now require a fleshly work to perfect it. This most likely refers directly to the fleshly rite of circumcision.

Verse 4.

Have they experienced the loss of those Spiritual blessings, that their possession was in vain?

Verse 5.

Paul describes his ministry to them, which included miracles. Did he do so by claiming he had this power by his own works of the law, or by his faith in Christ and the Spiritual blessings that faith included?

Verse 6.

To put all claims of the Jews and Judaisers in their proper

Galatians - Lesson III continued

place, Paul goes back to the very beginning in the person of Abraham. This was recorded in Genesis 15:6. Paul also quoted this in Romans 4:3-5. Abraham believed God and was accounted righteous - he was justified by his faith. Thus he was the father of the faithful, for all believers that came after. There was no circumcision or law then. God's promise to Abraham is also clearly recorded in Genesis 22:18 - 'and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.'

This verse is quoted in Acts 3:25 - 'Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.'

Verse 7.

Abraham was among the Gentiles (or heathen) when God called him, therefore all believers after him, are accounted as his children by the same faith.

Verse 8.

The Scripture recorded God's preaching of faith to Abraham, knowing that in the fulness of time, God would bless all nations through faith in that same Gospel.

Verse 9.

The blessings given to Abraham through faith are also received by all later believers.

Verse 10.

The opposite case is that of works of the law. No human being has or ever will be able to fulfill the law perfectly. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 -

'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'

The original verse -

'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them: and all the people shall say, Amen.'

Verse 11.

Another proof: Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 - 'the just shall live by his faith.' Therefore, no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God.

Verse 12.

The Law requires no faith, only obedience. Anyone that performs them perfectly shall live in them, but one failure brings the penalty of death.

Verse 13.

Christ has redeemed us from this curse, this penalty of death by taking it upon Himself. He took our punishment. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:23 where it describes the punishment of the worst criminals as hanged on a tree, as cursed by God.

Galatians - Lesson III continued

Verse 14.

Through Christ the blessings of Abraham come on the Gentiles - the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, the presence and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit and the promise of eternal glory. All comes through faith. The law brings the realization of sin in every person's life, and therefore the necessity of a savior.

Verse 15.

To give a common worldly example, Paul describes a civil contract - witnessed, signed, and sealed (or stamped). It then legally cannot be changed (taken from or added to).

Verse 16.

God made promises to Abraham and his seed (singular), not seeds (more than one). That seed is Christ, and through Him the spiritual blessings to all who would believe in Him. Again, only by faith, the spiritual seed of Abraham, through Christ.

Verse 17.

The covenant (the promise made) was confirmed before of God in Christ. That promise of the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) is the first, made to the first people created. Again to Abraham, justification before God through faith in the same promised seed - even Christ, our Savior. That promise included all those that believe as spiritual children of Abraham, having the same faith in God through Christ.

The covenant with Abraham was 430 years before the law was given through Moses. It was 1481 years after the Law was given that Christ came. The law in no way affected that covenant, not to annul or supersede. The Law was given and pertained only to the Jews, while the covenant included all nations through faith in the Messiah. The Law has no provision of salvation through works, only the curse of death, and unto only the Jews.

Verse 18.

Inheriting the law includes no promise. Abraham received the promise from God.

Verse 19.

The natural next question to the Jew would be - 'then why was the law given?' Simply stated, it was because of man's sinfulness. It made plain how far from God and His righteousness that people were living. Only when we are made aware of our sin do we recognize the absolute necessity of a Savior, only possible through God's mercy. This time of Law was only in force until Christ came. He fulfilled the Law, paid its penalty for all people, and thereafter it ceased. Angels were instruments in transmitting the Law to the mediator, Moses, who stood for the people with God. (Deuteronomy 5:5.)

Verse 20.

Paul made sure that it is clearly understood that God was one party in the mediation. The Israelites were the second party. Moses was the mediator between them. This mediation which was about the

Galatians - Lesson III continued

Law, in no way affects the promises, which included all nations.

Verse 21.

The next logical question - is the law against the promises of God? God forbid - no way! Only if any law could have been found that people could have followed, happily by choice and earned their righteousness. This could not and did not happen.

Verse 22.

Confirmation of this simple fact is recorded in the Bible from the beginning. All the prophets without exception spoke about the manifold sins of all people. The rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the law all declare the depth and extent of sin. All are guilty and await the penalty of death. This included their guilt. The Gentile - the unwritten law within the conscience. Both were in this sense guilty and 'locked up' or held in unbelief. The only way out had always been in God's plan, in His great mercy. That was His promise of the coming Redeemer, and that through faith in Christ they would be counted justified.

Verse 23.

Again, Paul describes the previous condition under the law as being kept, or shut up, until the revelation of Christ and justification by faith.

Verse 24.

Paul here uses the metaphor of the law playing the role of guide, caretaker, and teacher of children, preparing them, especially through the sacrifices, to be prepared to understand and accept Christ. Only He could provide our justification, which we accept by faith.

Verse 25.

Once faith comes, we no longer need the 'schoolmaster'. We have arrived, or graduated to the Truth, the Way, and the Life, which is by faith in Christ.

Verse 26.

We are now children of God by faith in Christ.

Verse 27.

As all who have been baptized into Christ, have professed publicly their belief in Christ as Lord and Savior, through this rite. To put on Christ describes being clothed in the sense of assuming a part of another person's character, speech, and behavior. His Spirit indwells and empowers every believer to follow His example, by thinking and acting like Him. He is our pattern and guide. This is our high calling.

Verse 28.

To put on Christ also means taking off all previous personal distinctions relating to worldly values. All believers are equally God's children. To make this unmistakable, Paul lists the most

Galatians - Lesson III continued

obvious previous distinctions: Jew or Greek (or heathen), bond or free, male or female. All are one in Christ. All are part of the Body of Christ, and He is the head. The differences of roles of men and women in that time, especially among the Jews, was severely against the women. They were not permitted to assemble with the men in synagogues. This is only one example. This was all changed in the Christian churches. They share the same rights, privileges, usefulness, and blessings. All are one in Christ Jesus.

Verse 29.

Paul gives the only possible conclusion to his whole teaching on this subject. As you all have believed in Christ, you are all of the spiritual seed of Abraham. As seed, also heirs of the promise, to be children of god and on the path to the inheritance of eternal life with God.

Next, Paul continues the contrast of Law and Faith.

Galatians - Lesson IV

Galatians chapter 4. Paul explains the Law as being the tutor until Christ redeemed them unto adoption as sons, heirs of Heaven.

1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Warning against Returning to Bondage

8 ¶ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.

12 ¶ Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

The Allegory of Hagar and Sarah

21 ¶ Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants;

Galatians - Lesson IV continued

the one from the mount Si'nai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar.

25 For this Hagar is Mount Si'nai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written,
Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not;
break forth and cry, thou that travailest not:
for the desolate hath many more children
than she which hath a husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the Scripture?
Cast out the bondwoman and her son:
for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir
with the son of the free woman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Verse 1.

The long-standing tradition was that the child appointed heir in his father's will, until he reached legal age, had no claim over anything. He was no better than a servant.

Verse 2.

He would be under guardians and trustees of the estate. They would be in charge of the affairs of the family until the time set by the father is reached.

Verse 3.

Paul is describing the condition of all Jews under the law as children (or 'nonage', not yet mature). The law contains the rules and regulations of how to correctly, under God, act 'in the elements of the world.' It did not contain salvation but outlined the need for it, which was promised and would be realized in the Gospel.

Verse 4.

The fulness of time came according to the plan of God, which He had revealed to His prophets. 'God sent forth His Son.' The Son was conceived of a woman (as promised in Genesis 3:15) by the Spirit of God, therefore the Son of God. Made under the law means He was born as every human, subject to all the same laws and its penalty. But He, uniquely, had been sent to fulfill the Law perfectly, and had not guilt, therefore had no penalty. When He was put to death, He took on the guilt of all mankind and paid for their sins. This freed men from the law, in which was no hope.

Verse 5.

This was the great redemption, paying the price for all (them that were under the law) by Christ's sacrifice. The law could no longer require works for people to attempt to save themselves. The

Galatians - Lesson IV continued

adoption of sons came with the Gospel.

Verse 6.

As sons, redeemed from the bondage and curse of the law, now, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into their hearts. This gives each believer the ability to communicate with God directly, even addressing Him as 'daddy' (or Abba), and Father.

Verse 7.

As a son, then no longer as a servant in the household, under the obligation of the Mosaic Law and rituals. Also now an heir of God through Christ. The inheritance is not earthly possession. We inherit God. This requires a new way of thinking.

Verse 8.

Paul here addressed those Gentiles in the Galatian Church, apparently a minority. They had previously been involved in idol worship, no real gods, without power or virtue.

Verse 9.

Now they have recognized and accepted God through Christ, and have been accepted - 'are known of God', now as sons in the family of God. Paul questions how they could turn back to rules and regulations - 'weak and beggarly elements' that only bring bondage. This seems to describe these Gentiles as formerly having been converted to Judaism, and now had accepted Christ. This explains why Paul is criticizing them about Jewish customs.

Verse 10.

Examples - observing certain days, months, and years as necessary to maintain their sense of righteousness of works. This would include Sabbath, or other days related to superstitions. 'Months' might signify new moons, certain feasts and festivals. Years might signify annual rituals of any kind.

Verse 11.

Paul expresses his great fear - that his life and ministry among them is now made of no effect - 'labor in vain.'

Verse 12.

Addressing them as brothers in Christ, Paul pleads with them to hang on to that faith, that truth, as he does. 'I am as ye are' suggests that Paul alludes to their former zeal as Jews, attempting to follow the Law, with all of its rites, rituals, and ceremonies. Thus, working for their own salvation. He has put that aside through the Gospel of Christ, as they had done under his preaching. Paul emphasizes that their present behavior has not injured him, nor given him any gain. It only injures them so he entreats them in the most loving concern for their welfare in Christ.

Verse 13.

Paul mentions that when he first preached to them, he was suffering from a physical 'infirmity'. No detail is given. The point

Galatians - Lesson IV continued

is that he was not at his best, obviously weakened and afflicted.

Verse 14.

He now compliments them for not holding this against him. They neither despised nor rejected him. On the contrary, they received him as a representative of God, an angel from heaven, even to their accepting him as the Savior Himself. It is easy to understand that Paul would suffer physically from his hardships in traveling (mostly by foot) in so many areas, where food, rest, and lodging were not necessarily or readily available.

Verse 15.

They had at the first received blessings with acceptance of the Gospel, the love, peace, and joy that it brings. Are they now still experiencing these blessings since they are following the Judaizers? He asks them to recall their serious, sincere devotion toward him by using the traditional proverb where such devotion would lead them to pluck out their own eyes and give them to him if he so needed them. This brings to the imagination the most extreme act - of sacrificing the most essential part of every person - their eyes. That was the love Paul experienced with them then.

Verse 16.

How can they now think and treat him as if he is now their enemy? Could it be because he will only tell them the truth? The same truth which brought them joy at the first!

Verse 17.

"Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them." (New Living Translation.)

Paul describes what is now happening under the influence of the false teachers. They are zealous and convince the Galatians to follow them, but not for the benefit of the Galatians. They only seek to benefit themselves. They demand that the Galatians separate from Paul and only show allegiance to them, and their doctrine.

Verse 18.

Paul designates zeal as good only if it is for good things. This was with them when he was present with them. They shared this warmth and determination in Christ.

Verse 19.

In his absence they have been enticed away from him and what he shared with them in the Gospel. He describes them and claims them as his little children. They were born again into the family of God under his labor. He had poured his whole heart and effort when he first ministered unto them, to bring them to the knowledge of the truth and their conversion. He is now experiencing the same feelings of pain and anxiety until they return and regain the Spirit of Christ.

Galatians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 20.

Paul wishes to be with them so that he can more accurately evaluate their actual condition. He needs to know how far they have strayed, to know how strongly or leniently to deal with them.

Verse 21.

They are called upon to question themselves. If they desire to be 'under the law', do they accurately understand what this means? Specifically - bondage.

Verse 22.

Referring to Genesis (16:15 and 21:2) he recounts the two children (sons) born to Abraham. One by the bondwoman, the other to a free woman.

Verse 23.

The first was a natural relationship, the child conceived, and born 'after the flesh'. The other son was born by the promise of God. Sarah could not, nor ever had conceived a child. Her giving birth was only by God's supernatural action, even as He had promised.

Verse 24.

These two events also represent a spiritual truth that goes beyond the natural event. They represent the two covenants of God with man. First, at Mt. Sinai, the law to bondage is Agar. All who similarly born under the law are bound to live obligated to keep the whole law, including all the sacrifices, rites, ceremonies. That included the curse because no one was ever able to perform that requirement.

Verse 25.

This Agar (Aagar) and Mt. Sinai (in Arabia) represented the Law, but now Jerusalem is the center of those who choose to follow this same Law, which for them continues the same curse. This goes far beyond the bondage required of them by their Roman rulers.

Verse 26.

The traditions of the rabbis include one of a spiritual city of Jerusalem in heaven where the righteous souls dwell. Paul agrees with this to the point of describing it as 'the mother of us all.' There is no bondage to sin, a free city with free inhabitants. As mother, the source of the Gospel of Christ, as well as the saints already passed on.

Verse 27.

This quote comes from Isaiah 54:1, a promise that refers to the conversion of the Gentile nations. They began as barren and desolate. Now they are bearing many more children than which hath a husband, the Jews. The Jews should be crying when they become aware of the Gospel spreading into the heathen nations, and not among them. But, it was their own choice to reject Christ.

Galatians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 28.

All is brought together. 'Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.' All Christians are the spiritual children of the Messiah, the promised seed of Abraham who would bring blessing to all the nations.

Verse 29.

Ishmael, born, in the normal, natural way (after the flesh), persecuted Isaac, who was born by the supernatural work of God. Paul observes this same persecution in his time. Those born of the flesh (the Jews) are against those born of the Spirit. This started with Christ, and then with all those born-again into the family of God through faith in our Savior.

Verse 30.

What does the Old Testament say about the outcome of the bondwoman and her son? Genesis 21:10 records that they were cast out and had no right to inherit anything from Abraham. Only those who believe in the promised seed of Abraham inherit the blessings also promised to him through that seed. Paul may be inferring that will be cast out of Jerusalem and Israel. They were cast out by the Romans less than 20 years from the writing of this epistle.

Verse 21.

Christians, Paul's brethren, are not of the flesh, as children of the bondwoman, but of the Spirit, as of the free woman. This obviously includes both Jews and Gentiles, who are not subject to the Jewish Law, its bondage, its obligations, and curse. This warning makes clear the serious consequences of choosing to take back the Law and after the fleshly attempt to work out their own salvation. The consequences were of the worst kind, both in the flesh, the bondage, and coming destruction of the Jewish nation, and in the Spirit by this action they reject Christ and His gift of Salvation.

Next, Paul continues to exhort the Galatians to stand fast in the benefits and liberty of the Gospel, and to warn them of the danger of the false teachers.

Galatians - Lesson V

Galatians chapter 5. Stand fast in the Gospel and its freedom. Reject those that are false and attempt to lead you into bondage.

Stand Fast in Liberty

- 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
- 2 ¶ Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.
- 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.
- 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.
- 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.
- 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.
- 7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?
- 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.
- 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
- 10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.
- 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased.
- 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.
- 13 ¶ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.
- 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.
- 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

The Fruit of the Spirit and the Works of the Flesh

- 16 ¶ This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
- 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
- 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
- 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- 20 idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
- 21 envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
- 23 meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
- 25 ¶ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Galatians - Lesson V continued

26 Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Verse 1.

Christ has made us free from the bondage of the Law which no man could ever fulfill, thereby saving themselves. They must 'stand fast' in the liberty given by Christ's Sacrifice for us. They must not become entangled and under the burden of weight as if putting a yolk on their necks to pull a heavy load.

Verse 2.

Paul is personally emphasizing his stand on this issue. The first requirement of the Law for all male Jewish children, and converts to the Jewish religion, is circumcision. By submitting to that rite, one is in effect denying the completed work of Christ on the Cross.

Verse 3.

This is like saying that Christ's sacrifice did not pay for all sins, and therefore one has to work out their own salvation by attempting to fulfill the law, the whole law.

Verse 4.

If you now want to earn justification by the Law, then 'Christ is become of no effect unto you.' Thus Paul describes as 'fallen from grace.'

Verse 5.

The true Christian, through the Spirit, has the hope of righteousness by faith in the finished work of Redemption by Christ. We have reconciliation with God, and rejoice in the promise of eternal glory with Him and Christ. This describes us as waiting and anticipating it, as well as experiencing here and now foretastes of that blessedness.

Verse 6.

To put it in proper perspective for all people, Paul states plainly that to be circumcised or to be not circumcised were equally of no value in Jesus Christ. The faith in the Gospel 'worketh by love.' The love of God is offered to everyone in the gift of His Son - accepting that gift brings with it the Holy Spirit and the response of love and gratitude. This love as genuine is active in desiring to please God, to be in His will, and to share their faith and substance with others. This principle of love is essential. James the Apostle labels faith without love as dead (James' Epistle 2:18,20,22).

Verse 7.

They began with that faith and were actively living out that principle of love. Paul is again using terms of a race - 'they did run well.' The question then, is, who was it that was able to entice them to turn aside from the truth, and drop out of the race? It was still their choice to do so.

Galatians - Lesson V continued

Verse 8.

They must admit that he (Paul) called them to acceptance of the Good News that Christ paid the price for their salvation. That Good News released them from the bondage of sin and the Law. After accepting that gift of love, why would they now decide that they must work to pay for that gift?

Verse 9.

This proverb points out the fact that even the smallest part of a false doctrine will grow in its influence from thinking to speaking and acting in a person's life. This could spread into a whole group. This question of circumcision may be a small thing in itself, a one-time activity, but would lead to taking on the obedience of the rest of the Law.

Verse 10.

At this point, Paul feels persuaded through the Lord that they will recognize the danger they are exposed to and will retreat from it. They will thereby stay within God's grace.

This one who had attempted to trouble the church, who sought to lead them into false doctrine, will receive the appropriate punishment - 'shall bear his judgment...' He was, to follow the parable of the Lord, sowing tares among the wheat.

Verse 11.

Apparently, some of these Judaizers are claiming that Paul is still preaching circumcision. The obvious question Paul raises is - if that was true, why was he still persecuted on every hand by the Jews as if he was still preaching the free grace through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross?

Verse 12.

Paul expresses his wish (and Godly advice) that those that were upsetting and causing divisions within the Galatian Churches should be put out of the Church. Thus they could no longer trouble the Church.

Verse 13.

Paul reminds them that the Gospel calls them to liberty from the burden of rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. This liberty is not to be immoral or seek pleasures of the fleshly kind. The Spirit brings also the freedom and power to put aside bondage and power of such worldly sins, unto the unselfish expression of love which seeks to benefit or 'serve one another.'

Verse 14.

The guiding principle of those who follow Christ is found and fulfilled in one statement - Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. This is the high calling to Christians to respond to the love of God through Christ, by thankful and joyful desire to return and share that love by conversation and actions toward God and other people.

Galatians - Lesson V continued

Verse 15.

Paul describes the dangerous behavior that was infecting and negatively affecting their fellowship. The word Paul uses is 'biting'. These disputes show anger, pride, unkind and untempered speech, and actions that are only destructive. If continued, they would destroy one another. They must 'take heed' of this warning.

Verse 16.

The great and necessary alternative is to 'Walk in the Spirit.' Therein lies the guidance and power to not fulfill the lust of the flesh. This is the spiritual calling of the children of God.

Verse 17.

The daily struggle between the normal lusts of human nature and the Holy Spirit will continue throughout each person's earthly life. We must be constantly aware of the pull and power of both to be able to follow the Spirit, put aside the selfish and fleshly temptations.

The pull of fleshly desire is so strong that, even though we know of and desire to do the best things of the Spirit, we are unable to perform them. Such is our weakness. Recognizing this, we must continually be dependent on the Spirit to help us choose and stay upon the right path. We know the other choices only lead in the other direction, which is harmful, negative, and destructive.

Verse 18.

As is his custom, Paul states the case in the simplest terms. The struggle remains with us, in every moment of every day. His advice - choose to listen to and be guided by the Holy Spirit, and you will be able to resist temptation and turn away from fleshly desires and evil attractions.

Verse 19.

There must not be any misunderstanding about these evil fleshly works. These are well-known and the most prevalent. Although the Jewish Law forbids them, it has no power to help overcome them, nor any way to escape the guilt and penalty for breaking them.

The List: Adultery and fornication - illicit sexual relations between two people who are not married to each other. Uncleaness would include unnatural sex acts, such as sodomy, bestiality, etc. Lasciviousness means any activity involving impure lusts and lewdness, or lechery. Every sexual propensity or activity outside of the privacy and propriety of marriage.

Verse 20.

Worship of idols and all of the activities associated with them (rites and festivals of the Greek Pantheon). Witchcraft, which included spells and incantations, and claims of power over evil forces. Drugs were also used. Hatred, a destructive choice, wanting another's pain and injury. Variance - hatred brings actions of confrontation, fighting, altercations in public and so forth. Emulations are feelings and actions from envy, whether by setting one's self up as better, or by cutting others down, so as to be above them. Wrath, anger, held in the mind - which leads to destructive

Galatians - Lesson V continued

speech and actions. Strife is openly disputing and arguing, whether in the home or in public, as a continual activity. 'Seditions' points to subverting the status quo, whether in civil government or a Church. This is done by organizing separate parties or factions against them. 'Heresies' includes parties in the Church choosing to set up different doctrines to divide and separate the unity of a Church.

Verse 21.

Envyings - the heartfelt desire for what others have; painful feelings and thoughts of doing them harm. Murder, the final expression of the hatred one holds for another, for any reason or excuse. Drunkenness - over-indulgence in intoxicating wine or liquor to the point of inability to function responsibly. 'Revelings' includes wild feasts or parties, obscene displays in music, songs, and behavior, usually also including drugs or liquor, or both. Such like adds any behavior that seeks to express evil passions.

All of these things were pointed out to them when Paul first preached to them, and also during his second visit to them (Acts 16:6; 18:23). They that do these things are not children of God; they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Verses 22,23.

Paul uses the example of trees to describe the two possibilities of the life of the human heart and spirit. He has already described the evil tree and its bad fruit in great detail. It came from bad seed, or the weakness of fallen human nature.

In these two verses, Paul describes the tree produced by the good seed, the Word of God, in the Gospel of Christ, administered unto conversion by the Holy Spirit. This is the good tree, that produces the good fruit of the Spirit. The first and greatest is unselfish love, the desire to please God, and to reach out to others for their benefit. This fulfills the whole intent of the Law as Christ taught it. The result of God's mercy and forgiveness, and this for ever, for anyone, brings exultation of mind and joy in the heart. It takes away all guilt and hopelessness.

Peace is experienced as calm and quiet resting in what God has done and will continue to do for us out of His infinite love and provision for us.

Long-suffering - to continue to remain positive through frailty or provocations or persecution from others. This is a reflection on the great patience that God has toward us, especially before we became Christians. God is with us through everything we may experience in this life. All things work together for good for us, as God's Providence provides for His children.

Gentleness is the opposite of every fleshly sin. This grace has only good intent; calm, unselfish, seeking to benefit others quietly with compassion. Goodness takes gentleness one step further by describing the nature of its speech and actions. This springs from a born-again heart, a perpetual desire to speak and act to help others in any way one is able to. Thus is good fruit produced.

Faith includes fidelity in one's thoughts and actions in relationships with others - to be punctual, trustworthy, and making

Galatians - Lesson V continued

good on any promises.

Meekness means being mild, patient with those that injure or cut us down. The very opposite of anger.

Temperance is the choice to be moderate especially in regard to sensual or the baser appetites (eating, drinking, sleeping, etc.). some have suggested that chastity could be included as consistent with temperance.

Against all these, there are no laws.

Verse 24.

All genuine Christians have in effect killed the former desires and demands of the flesh. Thus, they are no longer under that burden or feel or react to their influence. We are no longer servants of sin. Its power is nailed to the Cross.

Verse 25.

If we believe in a spiritual religion, that the Holy Spirit indwells in us, then that must be shown by our conversation and behavior. The cliché is pertinent - walk the walk, as well as talk the talk. To be valid, both must be observable at the same time. That is walking in the Spirit of God.

Verse 26.

What we must avoid is any desire to be vain-glorious, which means seeking only their own benefit, to brag, pushing oneself forward as superior to others, seeking popularity, honor, recognition, and so forth. These things lead to provocation, arguing, and upsetting, disrupting, about worldly things. Envy also comes from worldly values and selfishness.

The goal is unity of the Spirit among all believers. This includes peace, contentment, treating all others equally and with compassion and unselfish love. These are the fruit of the Holy Spirit among Christians.

Next, Chapter 6 - Paul advises to help those in difficulties, to bear each other's burdens.

Galatians - Lesson VI

Galatians chapter 6. Bear one another's burdens.

- 1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
- 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
- 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.
- 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.
- 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.
- 6 ¶ Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.
- 7 ¶ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
- 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
- 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
- 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Paul Glories in the Cross

- 11 ¶ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.
- 12 As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.
- 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.
- 14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.
- 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.
- 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.
- 17 ¶ From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Benediction

- 18 ¶ Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Verse 1.

Paul gives advice about what to do when a brother in Christ is taken by surprise, without warning, of a temptation he gave in to - 'overtaken in fault.' This was neither sought nor pursued. Those that are spiritually mature are responsible to recognize this and go to that person. He or she must, with humility (meekness), bring the person back into his or her proper place in the church. The Greek

Galatians - Lesson VI continued

words used - 'to restore' - are also used to describe a doctor restoring a dislocated limb to its proper place. Meekness suggests the opposite of haughty or harsh demeanor. This includes the recognition that any one of us has our own weaknesses and must face our own temptation. We also are vulnerable. We don't know that we won't be tempted and give in and therefore treat this brother as you would wish to be treated if in a similar situation yourself. Compassion is called for.

Verse 2.

To bear another's burdens is the high-calling of every follower of Christ. To love one another calls for actions, to actively seek to help and sympathize with any in need. Even as God with us, continually and forever, so we must attempt to be with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Verse 3.

For someone who thinks of himself as 'something', they are judging themselves as above, better than others, claiming some attainment of knowledge or virtue, to be closer to God among others. This attitude brings with it no charity, compassion, understanding, or desire to help those in need. This person deceives himself, and chooses to be 'nothing' or useless to God and others.

Verse 4.

The high calling of a Christian is to pattern their lives after the example and teachings of Christ. To judge one's own work is to test it according to Christ's example, and not any other person's. We are not to think better of ourselves by pointing out the weaknesses of others. The rejoicing in one's self alone comes from recognition of one's desire and work in following his Lord's example.

Verse 5.

We will all be accountable for how we dealt with our own burdens and not by comparison with others. We are to be responsible and carry our own load.

Verse 6.

Those that gather as a group to be taught in, the Word of the Gospel are responsible to 'communicate' in the matter of contributing to support this teacher 'in all good things.' He has dedicated his time and effort to preach and minister to the believers. It is unjust to benefit from his effort and not support him.

Verse 7.

Be careful here, to not deceive yourselves, or be deceived by others. God cannot be fooled by pretended outward behavior. He can read the intent of the heart. From the heart, the seed is sown, and what is sown will grow and mature according to that seed, that shall bear the fruit to be harvested.

Verse 8.

Consider this law of nature in the realm of human behavior. The

Galatians - Lesson VI continued

person that spends his time and effort on his earthly concerns, his flesh, will reap the fruit of them - corruption. The opposite is true of the believers in Christ who 'sow to the Spirit' will of that Holy Spirit reap life everlasting.

This includes those that by works of the Jewish law thought to earn salvation, starting with circumcision. Then adding the rites and ceremonies, all works of the flesh that bring disappointment, guilt, and condemnation.

Verse 9.

Let us not be weary in well-doing. The weakness in our human nature, and the worldly and selfish attitudes and persecution of those around us, opposes us and can influence us to become weary in well-doing. We must watch out for these influences. In due season, the fruit of our labor will be ready to reap. Due season will be at the end of our labor, in eternity in the kingdom of Heaven. A second word describing weariness, fainting, also calls for perseverance in our spiritual lives and earthly lives according to the example of Christ.

Verse 10.

We must be busy about sowing good seed. We must watch for any opportunity to help others according to our ability. Church members should be considered first, as extended family.

Verse 11.

Paul identifies this letter as having been written with his own hand. His usual method was dictating to a trusted companion, and his only writing the closing words himself. He has taken the trouble to write this lengthy epistle to them with only his own effort. They must understand this as a personal sign of his deep concern for their welfare.

Verse 12.

Jews were common and accepted in Galatia. The way it was practiced, their religion makes a fair show in the flesh. This suggests that observing the various rites and ceremonies could be practiced with no change of heart and was publicly acceptable. This was the path of ease the Judaizers tried to convince them of, beginning with the outward rite of circumcision. Their most reasonable motive was to do this to avoid persecution for being Christian.

Verse 13.

It appears that these people had been circumcised and profess Judaism for only a social benefit. They wanted to be accepted, honored, and popular. Adding converts to Judaism would give them high standing and reason for greater pride. Their desire and their actions show no intent to try to please God and obey His will by keeping the Law. They were working according to worldly values and rewards.

Verse 14.

Paul's motives are completely different. He has no pride or

Galatians - Lesson VI continued

desire to brag about such outward and worldly things. He only wants to praise and brag about the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest work of salvation for all people.

In contrast, all the worldly values no longer have control or influence over him (crucified to him). Those of the world now consider him useless and of no account to them.

Verse 15.

The plain, clear, and true situation in Christ is the gift of salvation by faith, rebirth as a new and spiritual creature. Fleshly things, whether a work of the Jewish law, as circumcision, or not being circumcised, can not earn or add to that salvation.

Verse 16.

To live (in our daily walk through this life) according to this realization of the truth, we have peace in our hearts through God's grace and mercy in the Gospel of His Son, Our Lord. Paul calls Christians the Israel of God, as those who live by faith, as contrast to the Israelites that live according to the flesh (to works).

Verse 17.

From this time onward, Paul does not want anyone to bother him about arguments and various disruptions or false doctrines. They must stick to pure teaching of the Gospel. They must separate from any dissenters or troublemakers. This would include putting such people out of the Church. They must step up to this responsibility and act on it and not depend on Paul to do something.

Paul states that he already has marks on his body from being punished and persecuted for his ministry in spreading the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. He has suffered enough already and will continue to be persecuted. They are asked to not add to these difficulties.

Verse 18.

In closing, Paul again addresses them as brethren. He wishes them to continue to experience the favor and blessings of our Lord Jesus, to be with their spirit to stimulate, enlighten, and empower them in this new way of life. Amen - so let it be. This is also his prayer for them.

The last words, 'Unto the Galatians written from Rome,' are not found in many manuscripts and not accounted as Paul's writing, and certain that he was not in Rome at this time, but in Corinth or Ephesus.

The End!

Next, we look into Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians - Lesson I

Introduction.

Asia was a busy metropolis in Asia Minor, the province of Ionia. It was where the Cayster River went into the Aegean Sea, about 50 miles south of Smyrna. Paul founded a Church here.

The best evidence indicates that this letter was written in Rome while Paul was under house arrest around 63 A.D. He was allowed visitors, and some of his regular companions would write for him and deliver his epistles to the different churches. This included Luke, Timothy, Aristarchus, Epaphras, and Tychicus, a native of Ephesus.

Chapter 1. Paul praises God for His great plan of salvation for all people.

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
¶ To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 ¶ Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved:

7 in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

11 ¶ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

14 which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Prayer for Knowledge and Understanding

15 ¶ Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord

Ephesians - Lesson I continued

Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Verse 1.

Paul identifies himself as Christ's apostle by the will of God. This was written to the believers at Ephesus, those that have been faithful in their commitment to their Savior.

Verse 2.

Grace is wished for them - the blessings of God's unmerited favor. And peace from our Heavenly Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3.

Paul calls for continual and eternal praise to be offered to God, the Father of Our Lord. He has given freely to us all spiritual blessings, meaning all those that are eternal and appropriate and destined for heavenly places. These were and are given - in, through, and by Christ.

Verse 4.

This plan began before the foundation of the world. God had chosen those who would believe in Christ. Paul is including the Gentiles here. The Jews reserved this for themselves as 'the Chosen People', and claimed God was only going to love and bless them. The gift of salvation also includes a high-calling of gratitude and obedience - 'that we should be holy and without blame before him in love'. We are to follow the spiritual values in speech and behavior, no longer a slave to sin and the earthly passions. The key for the sources of salvation is God's love. The key to an unselfish way of living is also love. This must be the motive, the guide, and the power of our lives - love to God and to people.

Verse 5.

Predestinate - originally a geographical word meaning a decision before determined that sets a limit or boundary. It is applied here

Ephesians - Lesson I continued

to describe God's fixed purpose and plan. It was His predetermination to include the Gentiles in the grace and blessing of the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ.

In a similar way, God had planned and set the boundaries of the Promised Land even before the giving of the Law. These things were planned before the foundation of the world. Now God was bringing to pass these eternal purposes of 'His' will - according to the good pleasure of His will'.

Just as the Jews claimed great privileges in being chosen of God and His direct giving to them the land of Israel, each portion given specific detail as to location and boundaries for each tribe. Paul is saying that God had also predetermined the calling and salvation of the Gentiles which the Jews should recognize and accept as equally in God's original plan.

Verse 6.

The proper response is praise - to the glory of His grace (His unmerited favor), to accept us through Jesus Christ, 'the Beloved.' This was unique - the greatest proof of God's love, His grace and mercy to all, because all have sinned.

Verse 7.

We are redeemed from the death penalty of sin, through the sacrifice of Christ. Through His blood, we have forgiveness of sins. This shows the greatest abundance of God's grace, and His eternal desire to save us for ever as His Children.

Verse 8.

This grace has overflowed toward us. This is also shown in the wisdom God has given to the apostles concerning Gospel truths and doctrine of spiritual things by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Prudence is included as guiding them when and where to proclaim the Gospel - to effect the salvation of that group of people. To be discreet and careful in words and actions.

Verse 9.

The mystery of God's will now made plain is the offering of the Gospel to the Gentiles. This was first revealed to the apostles. It was God's purpose and plan to now reveal this benevolent design, according to His good pleasure.

Verse 10.

Even as the father of a household would have a plan to manage his family and property, so God had a 'dispensation' or plan to provide salvation for a lost and dying world. This was including both Jews and Gentiles in one body, the Church of Jesus Christ, the head and governor.

The fulness of times identifies the condition of man and the world as the best and most proper time to bring God's plan about through His Son. Fulness brings fulfillment.

This includes a bringing together of people of any background or locality as one, one flock, one Church. The Church is in Christ, in earth, and in Him in heaven. We are in His heart and thoughts and He

Ephesians - Lesson I continued

looks over us as well as the whole of creation.

Verse 11.

In writing 'we' Paul is indicating those Jews that believe in Christ, now obtained an inheritance. This inheritance was promised to Abraham, and his spiritual seed, by faith.

Again, he emphasizes that this was God's plan and purpose to provide salvation through Christ, all after the council of His own will. As He planned, so He has brought it to pass. All was done without any human input or help.

The use of the word 'predestinated' emphasizes the plan as predetermined, foredescribed. This plan would make plain God's mercy, grace, holiness, goodness, and love for His creation.

Verse 12.

Again 'we' as Jews - they were the first to accept Christ. It was these Jews that were the means of preaching Christ to the rest of the world, the Gentiles. Thus they proclaimed praise and glory to God in the Gospel.

Verse 13.

The results of that preaching were those that Paul is writing to. They heard and trusted 'the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation'. They also received, as all believers before them, the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise. This proved their faith as genuine, being adopted into the eternal family of God. This is evidenced as the believer lives according to this truth, in sincerity before God and man.

Verse 14.

The 'earnest of our inheritance' is foretaste and pledge of the eternal inheritance. The redemption is the time when body and soul are changed into incorruption, the glorified body, even as Christ. The purchased possession refers to their being bought from sin and death by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. When this redemption takes place, it will be the height of glory and praise to Christ for His infinite love for us, from the beginning, continuing now, and then into eternity with Him and the Father.

Verse 15.

Paul had heard that their faith in the Lord Jesus had already born fruit in their loving, kind, and compassionate relationships with their fellow Christians, the saints.

Verse 16.

His response was to continually give thanks to God for this best of all outcomes for new believers. He also continues to pray for them to persevere in this blessed situation. He mentions them by name in his prayers.

Verse 17.

The source of all blessings in Christ is God - the Father of glory. He had the plan, and brought it to pass. Paul prays for them

Ephesians - Lesson I continued

to receive the Holy Spirit to instruct them in all the great truths that God has provided through the Gospel. All the details will bring understanding and wisdom concerning what Christ has done, and how we are to mature in response to that knowledge.

Verse 18.

As the eyes let in the light, so the understanding brings enlightening to the soul. This takes place only through the influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart (or soul or understanding). This brings knowledge of the great hope of God's calling. It also includes the glorious abundance of spiritual gifts and blessings which are provided by God for the saints, now His children, the inheritance for eternity.

Verse 19.

This is all a work of God's exceedingly great power - efficient, forceful, mighty. This is energy in action and beyond any earthly comparisons of measure. This power was exercised for believers to save us from our human weaknesses.

Verse 20.

The greatest example of power and purpose is seen in His raising Christ from the dead as an eternal work, and set Christ at His right hand in heaven. He is mediator between God and man. The right hand is the highest place of friendship, honor, and authority next to God.

Verse 21.

His place includes authority over all entities on earth that govern, all dignitaries and leaders that exercise power over others. Some have suggested this includes authority over angels (both good and evil ones). Not only this world (at the time of this letter) but also through that which is to come, the ages of human history, until eternity without end.

Verse 22.

God the Father has placed Christ above, to be the supreme authority (all things have been put under His feet). He is also the only head and highest ruler of the Church.

Verse 23.

To create a picture of this closest of relationships between Christ and those that have accepted Him as their Savior, Paul compares it to the closest of operations that all people can identify with - their own body. Christ's Church, Him at the head - all are included as parts of His body. He fills them all with His forgiveness, wisdom, goodness, peace, and gifts, and graces of the Spirit. We are complete in Him, and He in us as regarding all believers, visibly influencing the world around them. But Christ also fills all in all - this adds 'all' or everything in the universe. The whole creation is under His authority.

Next, Ephesians before and after conversion.

Ephesians - Lesson II

Chapter 2. Before and after conversion, and what then.

Saved by Grace

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2 wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3 among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5 even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6 and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
7 that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.
8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9 not of works, lest any man should boast.
10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

One New Man in Christ

11 ¶ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
12 that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
13 but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
15 having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
16 and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
17 and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.
18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.
19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
20 and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;
21 in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord:
22 in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians - Lesson II continued

Verse 1.

Paul continues what he began in Chapter 1. He is describing, by contrast, what Christians (specifically Gentiles) were like before and then after conversion. They have been 'quickened' by the Holy Spirit, reborn into the family of God. Their previous condition was 'dead in trespasses and sins.' They had been involved in all manner of worldly passions and worship of idols. They were incapable of seeing, understanding, or being able to work their way out of that condition. They were without hope, without God, and condemned. They were as good as dead, because they were living in sin and the penalty is death.

Verse 2.

In using the word 'walked', Paul means that they were daily and continually active, engaging in the practices and values of their world. This they would have continued until death.

He adds that the influence of satan and the fallen angels (now demons) who worked to promote and entangle people in disobedience to God. This was especially true of those involved in worship of idols, which were in reality the presence and influence of demons to all kinds of sinful excesses.

The prince of the power of the air has influence over the sinful heart and nature of man. Part includes actions against true religion, and/or transgression of God's laws.

Children of disobedience suggests those whose father is satan, disobedience (personified) is the mother. They are called 'children of the wicked one' by Jesus (Matthew 13:38). They are known by doing the works of the wicked one.

Verse 3.

Here Paul emphasizes that this was the condition of all people - Jews, Gentiles, and he himself in times past. The lusts of the flesh, the desires of the heart and mind, controlled both thought and action to produce corruption, selfishness, transgression against God and His righteousness. We are born with this nature and by following that corrupt nature in action and maturity, we produce all the fruits of unrighteousness. Thus we are the children of wrath. Obviously 'wrath' is God's displeasure because of sin.

Verse 4.

But God had a plan, formed before the Creation. This came from his love toward us, which included the greatest measure of mercy. Because of sin in nature and practice, no one could possess any merit to claim before God.

Verse 5.

Again, formerly dead in sins, now rescued by God through a new life with Christ, even as He was raised from the dead, so we through Him are quickened unto life eternal. This is the gift of God. By His grace, His unmerited favor, we are saved.

Verse 6.

The proof of the efficacy of Christ's atonement for our sins was

Ephesians - Lesson II continued

resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. Through our faith, we are now reborn as children of the Father. We are to inherit a place in God's kingdom. We are now connected to Christ in the Spirit by an unbreakable bond and fellowship. In this sense we are in Him in heavenly places, even as He is with all Christians, everywhere at all times.

At the Rapture, all believers will be resurrected and transformed, ascending to heaven. Jesus was the first fruit, and as certain as this historical fact took place, so is God able to bring His Church to Himself in heaven also. Look up - the time draweth nigh! (Please pardon the digression.)

Verse 7.

Paul recognizes that God's plan was according to His perfect timing. 'In the ages to come' - which no person was to know. His point is that God was making certain that the historical and factual Gospel of salvation through Christ be spread by those then living, and by their written testimonies, even as this Epistle. The message remains the same - by God's immeasurable grace, the unmerited loving-kindness toward us, is His gift of eternal salvation through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus for our sins.

Verses 8,9.

These next two verses are some of the most quoted as simply, yet completely, stating the most vital truths of Christ's Gospel.

We are saved by grace, through faith. It is not produced by any human effort. '...it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' All other religions, as products of men, include works so that people can perform to elevate themselves above others, and that would include pride and boasting.

One important understanding concerning faith being the gift of God. God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, awakens in man the possibility and power to believe. It is then left up to each person to act and use that power to believe, or not.

Verse 10.

We are new creations - God's workmanship as He had before ordained. Through the rebirth in Christ Jesus, we are God's children unto newness of life. The essential part of that high calling is to act like God's children, to please Him by our good works. This brings glory to God by showing His love, both as we become more like His Holy Son and beneficial to others.

This also puts in high contrast God's ways of kindness, unselfishness, forgiveness, and the peace and joy of our faith and hope, as against the worldly and fleshly values of selfishness, greed, excesses of every kind, that when followed only lead to negative consequences, and eventually to death and destruction.

Verse 11.

In order for these believers to stay alert and acting according to their new lives as God's children, Paul calls upon them to remember their former condition. They were Gentiles (without God), living in the world of the flesh, under the influence of corrupt

Ephesians - Lesson II continued

human nature. At that time they were looked down on by the Jews (the Circumcision of the flesh), and labeled as the Uncircumcision, outside of the covenant with God. Paul emphasizes the shallow and pointless bragging by the Jews, about the Circumcision. It is an outward act of the flesh made by hands. Spiritually, it had no effect. It was a representation of what must take place in the heart, in covenant with God.

Verse 12.

This verse has been the most quoted to describe the condition of all of humanity (except the Jews). He lists the essential spiritual truths they did not have. They knew not Christ (no Savior). They knew not God, which they would have as Israelites. Included in the Abrahamic covenants was God's promise of a Savior. Gentiles had no hope, no remedy of their sinful condition. They were in ignorance and darkness. Without God, they had no light to draw or guide them.

Verse 13.

That has dramatically changed now that they have accepted Christ Jesus, and by His blood, His sacrifice, they have been brought close to God, into His glorious light of forgiveness and adoption.

Verse 14.

All of the former differences in attitude and condition are now erased, bringing peace. Whatever wall separated people is now broken down. The Church accepts all believers equally.

Verse 15.

Christ in His flesh made atonement for sin, and also brought reconciliation with God. This abolished the enmity, replacing it with mutual and unselfish love toward God and man. To God goes the glory, our thankfulness and humility. To our fellow men goes peace and good will. The enmity had also been between Jews and Gentiles which the Jews despised and described commonly as dogs. The Gentiles likewise detested the Jews for their pride and claims of uniqueness - being God's Chosen Ones. Their various laws, traditions, rites, and ceremonies were judged as being peculiar and pointless. These laws and ordinances had the purpose of promise and expectation, pointing to the coming Savior. And as these were signs pointing to Christ's coming, they are no longer needed after His arrival. Now that He had come, He offered salvation to all men, no longer kept separate as of two, but now one in Christ, and in His Church. This was a new man established in peace.

This may also refer to the Jewish custom of a peace-offering sacrifice which was to bring peace. So also was Christ's sacrifice to bring peace.

Verse 16.

Again, reconciliation between all people and with God, by Christ's sacrifice, canceling any former reasons for strife or ill will.

Ephesians - Lesson II continued

Verse 17.

This was always part of God's plan - to preach peace to the far off (Gentiles) and the near (the nearby Jews).

Verse 18.

Through Christ, both have access to the Father by the one Holy Spirit. This also plainly states the Holy Trinity.

Verse 19.

Now all believers are children of God, equally accepted as fellow citizens of God's household. All are no longer strangers or foreigners, but called to be holy as in God's presence, the holy Church, His dwelling place on earth.

Verse 20.

Again, the Church as God's building on earth is being built. The foundation had been laid by the prophets and the apostles by their promises, prophecies, and eyewitness accounts of Christ. (This includes the Old and New Testaments.) The true and faithful doctrines based upon the chief corner stone, Jesus Christ Himself. From Him and by Him was set the purpose, the extent, the direction of all that came after.

Verse 21.

This building has been added to by each new believer in Christ as another stone, all equal and added, 'fitly framed together' as solidly and permanently connected together. The building will continue, it grows as and 'unto a holy temple in the Lord.'

Verse 22.

Paul directly includes his audience as stones added to this Temple of God for His indwelling. They are living stones He now indwells by the Holy Spirit. Part of the reason for Paul's use of this figure of the Church as God's Temple points back to the Holy Temple of the Jews as proscribed by God as His dwelling place among His People.

Next, Paul continues his appeal of the absolute necessity that he preach unto the Gentiles, without regard to anything anyone does to oppose him. He writes this from a Roman prison.

Ephesians - Lesson III

Chapter 3. Paul writes from a Roman prison about the heretofore mystery of Gentiles being fellow-heirs of God even as the Jews.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
2 if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
3 how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words;
4 whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,)
5 which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.
7 ¶ Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;
9 and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
10 to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
11 according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Prayer for Love Which Surpasses Knowledge

14 ¶ For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
16 that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;
17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,
18 may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
19 and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.
20 ¶ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
21 unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ephesians - Lesson III continued

Verse 1.

Paul gives the Jews credit for their persecuting him and causing his imprisonment, now at Rome. This had resulted from his ministry of the Gospel to Gentiles as equal to the Jews, but without the necessity of circumcision and the Mosaic Laws.

Verses 2-4.

This is the dispensation of God's grace, which they have heard from Paul while he was with them (Acts 20:27). He had declared the whole counsel of God that included them (the Gentiles) in the Gospel.

They must understand that God revealed this ministry to him (as in 1:9-12) which he had briefly mentioned in the previous chapter. The point is that he did not make up or choose this doctrine, nor did he learn it from others, or even from studying the Old Testament prophets.

They must keep this in mind, even as they read the words. What was a mystery is now made plain: God gave him the information, the original plan, that through Christ, forgiveness was to be offered to all people. Those who believed would be equal as part of the body of Christ, the Church.

Verse 5.

In the past it was not made clear, or taught by the prophets, that Gentiles would be saved outside of the Law, and that the Jews would be saved from the bondage of the Law.

The Holy Spirit of God was now the teacher, revealing these truths to the holy apostles and preachers.

Verse 6.

Again, the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and equally joined in the Church, with all the blessings and promises in Christ by the Gospel. Paul had previously expounded on this in Romans and Galatians (3:4).

Verse 7.

Paul was called out directly by the risen Christ to this ministry. This included the spiritual gifts, the power of the Holy Spirit that produced the conversion of many, both Jews and Gentiles. God is given the credit, the glory, the Giver of the greatest Gift, the very embodiment of His Grace in Christ Jesus.

Verse 8.

Paul again emphasizes God's power working. Paul, in his own abilities and strength, is 'less than the least of all saints...' He considers it his greatest gift and blessing to be called to this role of speaking for God the 'unsearchable riches of Christ.' Only by God's unmerited favor. He does not want any attention paid to himself, but all attention must remain on Christ and Him crucified. The term 'less than the least' describes Paul's feeling of deep humility, his having previously been a zealous persecutor of Christians also. Even in that state, God still condescended to his depth, to favor him with the unsearchable riches of Christ. These riches are described as unsearchable in the sense of God's purpose and plan from before creation, to prepare, bring to maturity and full

Ephesians - Lesson III continued

effect. This works out His loving grace toward His creatures in providing the way of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son with all the included blessings unto eternity.

Verse 9.

In this ministry, Paul spreads the light of the former mystery of God's plan for man's salvation through Christ. The fellowship now revealed in the Church includes all people that accept Christ as now equal, no matter their past or present situations.

God's plan was from the beginning of the world. He knew man, having free will, would choose to play it on his own, disregarding God's word and bring sin and death. Part of His plan was therefore to provide the perfect redemption, both righteous and just, through Jesus Christ, this came to pass according to His time schedule, openly, before all people; now the message was being spread by the eyewitnesses near and far.

Verse 10.

The most direct understanding of the principalities and powers in heavenly places must refer to the holy angels. They are curious and wonder at God's provision of the Gospel and how it changed man into a new creation in Christ, that now former enemies and weak and sinful people could joint together as equal's in the bond of believers in the Church.

I Peter 1:12 speaks to this point, this reconciliation between heaven and earth brings great wonder and praise for this powerful revelation of the manifold wisdom of God.

Some others have included evil angels and even the higher powers of the Jewish religion in this category. Both the plan and the great expanse of plan in human history passed in preparation and expectancy. Then, God brought to pass that plan, in spite of any and all hindrances and malice from dark spirits or evil men. Just as this was brought to pass at the perfect time, so also will all plans, prophecies, and promises yet future will just as certainly be brought to pass at their perfect time.

Verse 11.

The why and the how - according to the eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord. That the purpose is labeled eternal, means that God's plan will continue into eternity. All these plans were and continue to be centered around Jesus Christ.

Verse 12.

It is also by faith in Jesus we are brought into a relationship with our Creator. It is through His sacrifice that we have salvation and reconciliation, and the right to call out to Him in praise and prayer, with boldness and confidence. It is only in His Name and for His sake that all our prayers are heard by the Father.

Verse 13.

Paul expresses his desire that his present tribulations, such as being in prison, will not discourage them from pursuing and being

Ephesians - Lesson III continued

faithful and strong in their new way of living in Christ. They must take from this situation how valuable and ultimately the most important reason for being persecuted in his complete faith in God and the Gospel. He preached to them, by which they were converted. To him, it was the best outcome, 'which is their glory.' It must also be seen as the best outcome for them. This situation, Paul reminds them, is of eternal value as Christ is the center of their lives, both now and forever. There is nothing of equal or higher value in anything or anyone on this earth, ever. There is also nothing and no one to fear. Nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God for us through Christ our Lord and Savior.

Verse 14.

To bow the knees, or kneeling, was to show the greatest respect. The subject would kneel before his king or ruler. This was Paul's custom as he prayed to the Father of Christ. It was on their behalf that he prayed that 'ye faint not.' It has been observed that this description of Paul's praying, kneeling, closely resembles that of Solomon when dedicating the Temple (2 Chronicles 6:1-13).

Verse 15.

God the Father has one family - believers in Christ on earth, the spirits of just men made perfect, and the holy angels in heaven. All are the children of God.

Verse 16.

Paul continues his prayer for them. He begins by acknowledging God's infinite riches of love, mercy, grace, and goodness. It is out of His great bounty that Paul asks God to give these believers, His children, mighty Spiritual strength, within their deepest parts, the heart and soul, the 'inner man'. This is accomplished through the Holy Spirit indwelling each Christian. This strength is needed because of all the people and forces in the world against Christians. Also, many temptations to resist, and duties to be performed.

Verse 17.

For this strengthening of the inner man, there is Jesus Christ, the true bread, the Living Water, that dwells in believers' hearts by faith. To keep faith strong, it must be exercised. This must be kept in mind constantly and intensely.

To help picture this spiritual truth, Paul uses familiar terms - as trees of faith to bear fruit, they must be rooted in God's love. This soil provides all things for healthy growth, thus is Jesus instilled in them. To be grounded describes a building whose foundation should be laid on the best possible ground. Both must be solid and unshakeable. This is what God's love provides as our foundation, solid, unmovable, in Christ our Savior forever.

Verse 18.

Paul wants them to comprehend, to be strong enough to seize upon these wonderful mysteries of God. Again Paul describes the dimensions of a building being built, in comparison with the building of God's Church, in which He dwells, in every part. To take this concept one

Ephesians - Lesson III continued

step further, we are to search out, in every possible direction, the extent of God's love. Obviously, this is way beyond even our best imaginations, because it must also include eternity, from before the Creation to after its destruction and the eternal state. This also includes the concept that God's love can reach every person, and that every person can be certain of God's presence with them in every place, situation, and moment.

Verse 19.

The best and unique sources of trying to grasp God's love is the love of Christ. We can contemplate this as God's plan from before Creation, the preparation, the bringing to pass of His promises to provide a Savior in Christ. We can speak or write the words, but our minds can only go so far in comprehending its extent in every direction (space, time, emotion, dedication, mercy, grace, tenderheartedness, long-suffering, and so on). Paul puts it plainly in describing God's love as past knowledge.

The result of all a person's effort to contemplate this subject is - that person will receive, through the Holy Spirit, all of the graces, blessings, and gifts that they can contain. They will be filled to the extent that all of the fulness of God can fit. This increases with maturity, the growth of becoming more like Christ. This closes Paul's prayer for their greatest blessing and understanding in the Gospel.

Verse 20.

Paul lifts high his praises of God, the provider as loving Father, Who gives in more abundance and extent than we could ever ask for or think of. God is not only able but willing. The power comes through the indwelling Holy Spirit of each believer.

Verse 21.

Glory and thankful praises to God are to be seen and expressed in the Church for all these blessings through Christ. This Church and its Gospel will continue throughout all ages, as long as humans do. And also, and uniquely, this same Church will continue into the world without end, eternity. Glory and praise to God also eternal. Amen. So be it. Let it come to pass even as faithful and true are all God's power and promises, both now and forever. Amen.

Next - Paul calls upon them to walk worthy in their new life.

Ephesians - Lesson IV

Chapter 4, verses 1-16. Paul calls upon the church to 'walk worthy' in their new life.

The Unity of the Spirit

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;
 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
 8 Wherefore he saith,
 When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?
 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)
 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
 12 for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
 13 till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:
 14 that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
 15 but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:
 16 from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Verse 1.

Paul, a prisoner because of his faith in the Lord, entreats these Church members to live out their lives to God's glory. They have the choice and the freedom to pursue Christ-like speech and behavior. They have accepted the gift of the Gospel and have become God's children and therefore should 'walk worthy' of the privileges they have received.

Verse 2.

To so walk worthy includes great humility and meekness (not irritable or pushy). Long-suffering describes patience, while under duress, that does not reach its end. Forbearing in love, we must

Ephesians - Lesson IV continued

support and be concerned to help those weaker or in more difficult circumstances or illnesses than we are.

Verse 3.

Considering the dramatically different backgrounds of Jewish and Gentile converts, effort must be directed to keep the newfound unity in the Gospel, by the Holy Spirit. The foremost effort must be maintained to keep the bond of peace at all times. The true bond is within all believers by the Spirit of God. All other concerns of personal or worldly values are of the least importance.

Verse 4.

In Christ, there is one body (the Church), one Spirit, one hope in their calling.

Verse 5.

One Lord (head of the Church), one faith and baptism, all are equal in privileges and doctrines.

Verse 6.

One God, Father of all, both in the whole creation and all mankind. His authority is over everything, providing for and supporting all things and being present in (pervading) all things. This includes His being present in all believers, in the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, purify, comfort, encourage in faith, and practice to become more Christ-like.

Verse 7.

Though all equal as children of God, yet each one is different in what our responsibilities and particular situation is in the world and in the Church. We are given grace in the gifts given by Christ to enable us to perform those functions we are called upon to do. While this will benefit us, more importantly, it will also be for the benefit of others.

Verse 8.

Paul quotes Psalm 68:18. This reference was intended to point to the ascension of Christ. The terms used in the Psalm refer to a military victory. The Victor is ascended on a very high seat above all others, having complete authority over all. All those who opposed him, having fought to capture him, are now his captives. He has 'led captivity captive'. As conqueror, the custom was to be generous and give gifts unto men. Also, as conqueror, he will now live among them and rule over them. In the spiritual sense, The Lord God, has been victorious in the hearts of men through Christ, Who now has ascended, has given gifts to those believers and dwells among them in the Holy Spirit. In this way, Paul uses earthly terms and situations to help people more easily comprehend spiritual realities.

Verse 9.

In order for us to even try to imagine the height above the heavens, that Christ has ascended to, Paul suggests that we try to imagine the innermost parts of the earth and the descent of Christ to

Ephesians - Lesson IV continued

that extreme, even more so now is His being, exalted above all and filling all things. From there, He - victoriously and bountifully, can give gifts to people as he sees fit to bless them and enable them to serve Him in the graces of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 11.

Now, having explained the origin and purpose of those gifts, Paul goes into detail of the various jobs or offices within the body of Christ, in the local churches. He established first the apostles, called, trained, and empowered through the Holy Spirit for their work. Then the prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers were added.

Verse 12.

Their roles were all for the purpose of 'perfecting the saints'. They were to grow and mature as they were instructed and practicing to become more and more like their Savior, in gratitude and humility. This would also bring unity of all believers, now centered only in Christ. The old and corrupt things of their former lives must be put and then kept aside. That the Gospel be spread and the churches fed was the essential work to always be continued. Thus the body of Christ will grow in faith and holiness of speech and actions, love to God in Christ, and to other people.

Verse 13.

Conversion into Christianity comes from faith in the same facts and doctrine of the Gospel of the Son of God. Each person is united in that faith with other believers. This knowledge of Christ includes the whole history of God's plan to send a Savior in the flesh to fulfill that plan and how that took place in the life and death of Christ to pay for our sins, thus our forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

The goal in each convert's life is to learn all they can about Christ and strive to become like Him unto 'a perfect man'. 'The stature of the fulness of Christ' is the ideal, the perfect example to continue to look to as guide and goal and pursue in thought, conversation, and action. That the ideal may be reached in our human lives is impossible goes without saying. That Christ is with us, and in us through His Spirit, gives us the will, the power, and the courage to keep going through whatever our imperfections or difficult circumstances. This is maturity in the faith.

Verse 14.

Paul compares not doing so to how children are, and how they act. They are tossed about, playing one thing, then another, as they are easily distracted - 'by one doctrine, then another.' They have no certain knowledge or mature strength, mentally, to judge between the truth and flashy tricks or clever illusions that deceive and lead astray. Paul warns about those false teachers or evil ones who 'lie in wait to deceive'.

Verse 15.

Christians should not be lead astray. Instead, Christians are to

Ephesians - Lesson IV continued

speak the truth in love, thus seeking only to benefit and comfort and encourage others in the faith. God's gift of love is His Gospel that we have received. To share that Good News includes sharing that same unselfish love with others. Again, Paul uses the metaphor of the maturing of a human body with Christ as the head. We are members of that body, each called upon, guided and nourished to grow up into Him. This is the natural pursuit of maturity that should be taking place in every Christian's life, and in every Church.

Verse 16.

Paul continues his comparison of the way a human body works with how the Church should function. The whole body works together, each part connected and 'joined together', each performing its function for the benefit, growth, and maturity of the whole. The Church, each member having its own particular function, jointly united in Christ and working together for the maturity of the whole. As in the human body, all parts are essential for the functioning and growth of the whole. The edification of the body of Christ is in unselfish love, in every part, at all times.

Next, verses 17-32. Paul turns from what they are called upon to do, to what they must not do.

Ephesians - Lesson V

Chapter 4, verses 17-32. What Christians must not do.

The New Life in Christ

17 ¶ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 ¶ Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Verse 17.

Paul describes 'other Gentiles' as acting only according to vanity, they think about only the sensual and fleshly appetites, and spend all their effort pursuing them in their daily lives (their walk). With authority from God, Paul testifies that as believers in Christ they must not live like the unbelievers. As Paul has already described, their higher calling in Christ and the guidelines for their Christian behavior, in thought, conversation and action. He feels it is still necessary to clearly lay out what must be avoided to keep them alert to temptations that are questionable or seem natural. This would include the idol worship and the desires of fleshly rewards attached to them. Paul labels this as foolishness (the vanity of the mind).

Verse 18.

This ignorance of the true God is described as the mind being

Ephesians - Lesson V continued

'darkened' and the heart being blind. Their darkness had increased by their continual sinful behavior, leading only to destruction. He uses the word 'alienated' to describe their relationship to God because of their ignorance and their culture had no guiding light, moral compass, or reason to restrain their basest and most extreme behavior.

Verse 19.

Being blind and in the dark has brought them to the condition of having no conscience (being past feeling). This has produced total action and dedication to the worst categories of sinful behavior. Lasciviousness includes all kinds of filthiness, lechery, debauchery. There was no restraint and almost all of their myths of gods and goddesses also involved this behavior. To work all uncleanness means a dedication to do always and to the furthest extent the selfish, the sinful, the most destructive and pernicious things. All is done for that person's benefit alone - complete and total greediness.

Verse 20.

They have now been taught in complete contrast to their former state or condition. They have learned the truth in Christ; the light, being pure, dispels the darkness.

Verse 21.

Paul reminds them that they had heard him, and been taught by him, the truth that is in Jesus. This truth is universal and eternal, and both freeing and empowering to new and good behavior.

Verse 22.

This is a process: to put off the former conversation (the old man), the corrupt, deceitful, fleshly lusts. This suggests the idea of taking off an old and filthy garment, as it is now useless. The change is also within - the understanding and the soul being renewed. The light of God's glorious Gospel replaces and dispels the former darkness and shadowy nature of sin.

Verses 23,24.

The new man which is now created through Christ resembles the great attributes of God - righteousness and true holiness. This was God's purpose for man from creation, to create man in His Own image. This puts the believer in the true and reconciled relationship with his creator, now as his Heavenly Father, forever. Thus our 'new' man has the high calling to become ever more like Him, in humble gratitude and loving fellowship.

Verse 25.

This demands the highest moral character. Number one on the list is 'putting away lying'. All lying is false, incorrect, misinformation, the complete opposite of truth and reality. The best tool of the devil. Again, Paul reminds the reader that if one part of the human body acts contrary to truth, it affects the whole body, and the purpose and authority of the head. Also in a Church, Jesus being the head, all others are members - one of another. These connections

Ephesians - Lesson V continued

are held together in the truth of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 26.

There are many reasons to be angry. But to act destructively as a result is sinful. Let the emotion pass, do not dwell on it - get over it and put it aside before the day is over. Otherwise, malice and revenge may appear justified and lead to sinful actions.

Verse 27.

The adversary, the devil, wants to irritate and influence believers. His methods include all kinds of falsehoods - the rumor, the suggestion of evil intents, the backbiter, slanderer, false innuendos. The intent is to arouse anger, distrust, malice, and all destructive behavior associated with them. This, then, destroys the loving fellowship and unity within any group. To be aware of this will help to recognize such possibilities and give them no place.

Verse 28.

Any form of stealing must be stopped. It is opposed to all Christian standards of conduct. This must include being honest and truthful in all transactions. No fraud or illegal dealings. To honor Christ everyone should 'labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' A craft or needed service that is honest labor provides a benefit to others and a living to the laborer. Thus his needs are met honestly. Also this may even provide more than his own needs, and he may then help those in worse circumstances. We have read that Paul worked at his trade wherever he went, so as not to be a burden to others, and to help others also.

Verse 29.

Corrupt communication includes all the following - useless, out of date, putrid, and impure, all false accusations, intended to damage, and injure others, obscenity, scoffing at other's beliefs or customs, and so forth. If you have any such thoughts, make certain they do not 'proceed out of your mouth'. You must maintain control.

The focus must be on 'that which is good to the use of edifying.' This benefits the hearers by the understanding of God's love through the Gift of His Son for our salvation. This is Good News bringing peace, comfort, assurance and joy to them. This builds them up and encourages them to think, speak, and act according to that grace.

Verse 30.

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. This Spirit is the indwelling gift of God, sealing us, as children of God, for eternity. This is the Spirit of light and truth, which will guide and empower us unto good works. It is our calling to avoid all things that would give negative and hurtful thoughts and actions. Even as putting obstacles to block a light brings shadows and makes the light of less effect, so sin and evil within a believer 'grieves' and makes the Spirit of less effect, increasing the darkness within. This is the situation all believers are in - our sinful and selfish nature at

Ephesians - Lesson V continued

odds with the holy and pure Spirit of God. As Paul previously described that nature as the 'old man' that must be put off, he gives a detailed list of these old sinful ways to get rid of and stay away from.

Verse 31.

This is directed at Church members who only criticize and complain against others that don't meet their standards. They consider themselves as above all others, as if it is their role to hold all others' faults against them (even to claim it is for others' benefit). This only and always causes harm.

Wrath and anger are followed by actions that inflict pain and injury. These must always be avoided. Clamor suggests uproar, loud arguing, brawling to upset and destroy all peace, love, unity, and fellowship within a Church.

Evil speaking - the only purpose here is to do harm. It is also blasphemy, because it is formed against God and all truth.

Malice is the inner intent and desire to injure and / or destroy the object(s) it is against. Intent waits for opportunity.

No society or smaller gathering of people can be sustained where these things are tolerated. If tolerated, they will eventually overcome and destroy.

Verse 32.

The requirement of putting all the evil and destructive things aside is also a turning and putting on the positive things. These are the direct opposite. The mind of the believer seeks ways to do good and benefit others - be kind. It is a mental choice and attitude that leads to positive and helpful actions and words. Tenderhearted means having ready compassion for those in distress and pain, whether physically or in circumstances.

To forgive one another, is to choose not to react negatively when one is hurt or injured by someone. To forgive is the positive reaction that cancels the negative. The motive and example both come from God in His action of sending Christ to die for our sins so that He has forgiven us. We had no claim or merit, and certainly lived in sin. God is faithful and just in continuing to forgive us, so we must be to others, for Christ's sake, not by our own purity or holiness.

Next, Paul continues to detail our high calling in Christ.

Ephesians - Lesson VI

Chapter 5, verses 1-16. Paul continues to describe our high calling in Christ as contrasting the worldly sins that are so prevalent.

Walk as Children of Light

- 1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
- 2 and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor.
- 3 ¶ But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
- 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
- 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
- 8 For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;
- 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
- 10 proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
- 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
- 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
- 13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
- 14 Wherefore he saith,
Awake thou that sleepest,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give thee light.
- 15 ¶ See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Verse 1.

To follow God is to attempt to walk (act and speak) as He does (as in His footsteps). Just as we are His dear children, our desire should naturally be to imitate Him in every way possible as in returning His love for us.

Verse 2.

Put most simply yet comprehensibly, 'walk in love.' This is in relationship to God and men. The guide and measure of this love is from Christ. He loved us, gave Himself for us, choosing to die for our sins.

As an offering was made to God as thanksgiving and gratitude to God for His earthly bounty of blessings which men routinely neglected. The sacrifice, only the shedding of blood, to pay for our sin.

Ephesians - Lesson VI continued

Jesus offered up Himself as gratitude offering, which man owed God for all temporal blessings. Jesus also sacrificed His sinless life to pay for our sins. The penalty for our sin was our death, and removal from the presence of God forever. Jesus took our place, reconciling us to God with all the temporal and spiritual and eternal blessings. This was an is God's love and mercy for us through Christ.

A sweet smelling savor to God refers to the burnt offerings, the fumes with their smell ascending as to heaven. This was prescribed by God and God would be pleased with those that offered them. God was pleased that Christ had fulfilled all of these according to all the requirements of His law, rites, offerings, and sacrifices. He accepted Christ's giving of Himself and raised Him to His (the Father's) right side in Heaven.

Verse 3.

Back to the opposite direction - worldly, selfish, destructive. Fornication would include all sexual activity outside of marriage, as well as adultery. Uncleaness would add other varieties of a sexual nature besides one man and one woman - sodomy, bestiality, with children, or groups. Unnatural and abominable to God. Covetousness describes the excessive desires and uses of otherwise neutral things, such as food, dress, money, possessions, etc. Never satisfied, always seeking more, and holding on to everything already possessed. Those things he loved become his god. The love of money comes to mind as an example.

These things must never be named among you. You are above and beyond such dark, evil, and destructive things. To belong to Christ, as God's child, you have answered and begun a higher calling, to be holy, pure, as saints.

Verse 4.

These things mentioned are useless, and wastes of time and effort They also serve a negative purpose, which is to speak or act in an ugly or dirty way (filthiness. Also included is foolish talking, whether stupid humor, or ridicule of others. Jestng suggests turning any serious or good subject into a joke, which could be obscene or offensive, making fun of others to cut them down.

All these are distractions and take away from good, considerate, and helpful encouraging communication and behavior of Christian people. The best we can do for each other is to keep us mindful of God's love and continual blessings, both in Christ and in our daily lives. This always leads and reminds us to be thankful, to continue in prayer and praise to God, and to build up our beloved brethren in the Lord.

Verse 5.

One thing that they have completely understood about God is His attitude toward sin, and the wages thereof. Those that continue to live out their sins are working for their own death penalty. God's kingdom is prepared for those that turn from their sin through Christ and are pardoned, and accepted as heirs of God and Christ's eternal kingdom.

The sinners are called by their chief sins as describing the

Ephesians - Lesson VI continued

focus of their daily preoccupations, totally selfish and self-serving without a moment of thought of the needs or welfare of anyone else. They will receive their just reward. It will not be with God.

Verse 6.

Obviously there would be some people that would try to convince believers that these things weren't all that bad, so common, and examples of the weaknesses of human nature. Believers must be consistent in avoiding all of these things, as they are most serious sins, even abominations in God's sight. They are under the wrath of God and eventual punishment is certain. They clearly and openly disobey God, doing the things He abhors. They are called 'the children of disobedience.'

Verse 7.

Now knowing the truth and the light, believers in Christ must have no part with them. Do not even listen to their vain words and resist any influence that could lead you astray to the evil of their actions.

Verse 8.

Those that are still in the dark beliefs and actions as they had previously been in are still in darkness. Believers had come out from them into the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ unto adoption, now God's children of light.

Verse 9.

Part of that light is provided within each believer by the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is the seed that was planted in each believer's heart, the living water of Christ, the light of the Spirit, all together produce the best possible fruit - 'all goodness and righteousness and truth'. All is said and done to the glory of God and benefit of all people.

Verse 10.

This is the acceptable path and behavior God expects of His children. This also proves the truth of the Gospel - the mercy, love, and power of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

Verse 11.

The works of darkness produce no fruit but corruption, and must be spoken against. They must be recognized and avoided as useless lies. They bring no benefit now or ever.

Verse 12.

Paul mentions the secret things that are done, which are so polluted and disgusting that it is shameful to even speak about them. These include the mysteries of rites and ceremonies related to certain Greek and Roman deities, done at night in darkness in secluded, private places. Supposed unique secrets, incantations, and magic, communication with dark forces of nature, and so on. All darkness, downward, destructive, hopeless.

Ephesians - Lesson VI continued

Verse 13.

The appearance of the light, which is truth, makes all these things obvious and seen very clearly for what they are. It also makes clear what their true purpose and end product are. That is why they are reproved or spoken against as dangerous and destructive sins.

Verse 14.

Paul describes the Gentiles' former condition as spiritually asleep, as dead in their trespasses and sins. Nevertheless they were able to be awakened by the voice of Christ in the Gospel and to recognize its mercy and truth. By accepting God's offer they were born again into the light of Christ and His salvation.

Verse 15.

In this new light, they are to live carefully, alert and aware of what to avoid. Just as no wise person would walk straight across a cow pasture, but would do so circumspectly, looking around before every step to avoid the naturally occurring cow plop. Just so in our Christian walk we must ever be alert to the sins and temptations of this world, all around us, in our lives, every day.

Verse 16.

Redeeming the time speaks to not wasting your time in frivolous pursuits. To redeem is to give each moment value - to glorify God, to encourage and edify others, to do good for them. This makes your time valuable, as preparation for eternity, and as the beginning as a child in God's kingdom.

This requires special attention and effort because of the sinful state of general society and pagan and idolatrous religions. This seems to be still an apt description even of our present world cultures.

Next - further details of a proper Christian way of life.

Ephesians - Lesson VII

Chapter 5, verses 17-33. Further details of a proper Christian way of life.

- 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
- 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
- 19 speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
- 20 giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- 21 submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Be Subject to One Another

- 22 ¶ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
- 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
- 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
- 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
- 26 that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
- 27 that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
- 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
- 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
- 30 for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
- 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
- 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
- 33 Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Verse 17.

The word translated 'unwise' here describes those who act like madmen, as in a drunken stupor, irrational and out of control. This must be always avoided.

What must be done is to thoroughly understand what God's will is for His children, that they may live to glorify Him. The example is Christ - be sober, chaste, loving, forgiving, kind, and pure.

Verse 18.

Paul explicitly singles out drunkenness as a weakened condition that had led to many excesses. All normal restraints and limits were forgotten and the worst kinds of immorality and indulgence were practiced.

Ephesians - Lesson VII continued

Christians must choose to be influenced by the best positive and upbuilding entity - the Holy Spirit. This will bring wisdom and understanding of God's will, His loving relationship with His children. This is always for our good, for us to mature in faith and practice.

Verse 19.

To keep negative thoughts and worldly temptations aside, Paul gives us the positive alternative. This is to keep readily in mind uplifting spiritual truth from God's word, whether speaking verses of Psalms (or hymns), or singing the words or melody of spiritual songs. This keeps God with us, in our hearts, and keeps our focus on how transitory and temporary this life in the flesh is, and that we are on our way with God and Christ to our home in eternity.

Verse 20.

This also keeps us mindful of God's present bountiful blessings. In the sense that we must be always giving thanks unto our Heavenly Father. His bounty is from His tender-hearted loving-kindness and always so much more than we could ever deserve. It is only through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have the right to approach God. In His Name, God hears our prayers and praise. He is our High Priest, our Mediator, Who intercedes for us at God's right hand.

Verse 21.

Now prepared in your personal life, this is how you are to interact with fellow believers. Again, recognize God as in charge and follow His guidelines. This places first the peace and unity of the Church. This means giving in (submitting) to one another in incidental or neutral matters. The bond is unselfish love in the spiritual family and the precious rule is necessary as done unto the Lord.

Verse 22.

It was and continues to be God's will and plan for wives to submit unto their husbands as the church acts under the authority and leadership of Christ.

Verse 23.

This in no part suggests the behavior of a tyrant's capricious dominance. The value and only purpose is the loving care, protection, and daily providing for the best welfare, necessities and needed comforts, according to his ability and power, for wife and children. The example is Christ as head of the Church to do all things for the Churches' welfare even in the things necessary for the physical (fleshly) life, also according to His ability and power.

Verse 24.

In everything of a beneficial, and positive nature, as the believers in any local church do their best to obey and follow the example and directions from Christ, so also should the believing wife follow their husband's example and directions.

Ephesians - Lesson VII continued

Verse 25.

The very highest standard is called upon to be followed by the leadership of the husband in the family. That was set by the action of Christ in the extent of His love of the Church, in His willingness to even forfeit His life for it. In this same spirit of this self-sacrificing love is the husband to act toward his wife, as even willing to give his life for hers. This description of love is totally for the other person's welfare and benefit, therefore unselfish even to the giving up of the self to death.

Verse 26.

The Church is represented as the spouse of Christ. Christ sets apart the Church as His beloved and prepares the Church for Himself by washing and making it clean. This describes the ancient custom of preparing women to be consorts to kings by various methods of purifying and anointing with oils and perfumes. Christ's method of preparation includes the washing of water, represented by baptism, then the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, and all according to the Word, the doctrine of the Gospel that is applied, as part of every believer's daily life. The Word informs and also empowers the believer to his or her higher calling to honor and glorify God by all effort spent in becoming more like His Son, our Lord.

Verse 27.

The one prepared for a king is presented in the most attractive and perfect manner and condition. This is the plan of Christ for the presentation of the Church in the most glorious possible condition. There will be no spot or blemish on the person, the garment, the heart, and the life. There will be no mark of age, decay, or illness - 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing'. They are to be holy and perfect. Christ appointed each believer's responsibility to follow His ordinances of love and forgiveness, the sharing of the Word of Reconciliation with God through His blood. We are to grow and mature unto His likeness, guided and empowered by His Holy Spirit unto that day.

Verse 28.

Referring to creation of man and woman, the woman was created from part of his side, she was flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone. She was made of him and for him. Therefore being thus of one flesh, to love his wife equally, as he loves his own body is the same as loving himself. This was the original relationship of the first man and his wife.

Verse 29.

It is universally natural and necessary for every human being 'not to hate his own flesh' because that only leads to its destruction. Paul observes that 'no man ever yet hated his own flesh.' The direct opposite is universally practiced - to nourish and cherish it, to take the very best care of it continually. Paul says that this is the way that Christ loves and takes care of His Church.

Ephesians - Lesson VII continued

Verse 30.

'We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.' Think of Jesus on the cross - the Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear, to prove He was dead. His blood spilled forth. We are joined to Him by His death - and this forever. We are also joined to Him through the Spirit so both naturally, and spiritually, we are united to Him.

Verse 31.

Quoting from Genesis 2:21-24, Paul reminds his readers of the original spiritual and physical law that was given by God for marriage. When a man reaches maturity, he is to leave his parents and seek out a wife. Their union is to be as strong as possible, the example of being joined together as two pieces of board that are cemented. The jointed cannot be broken, but the boards may be broken off, thus only death can separate the joined parts. In the marriage, the two are joined into one entity, one flesh.

Verse 32.

Paul identifies this unity in the creation of Adam and Eve as God's design to be fulfilled spiritually in the unity of Christ and the Church. It was a mystery as to its spiritual fulfillment in this union, now revealed as part of God's plan from before Creation.

Verse 33.

And so the proper response to God's institution of marriage and the clearly stated nature of the relationship must be a permanent bond of unity. Every man in particular is called upon to love his wife 'even as himself.' All the love that he can give to his wife will also benefit him, always good and helpful, also benefiting them together. The wife is called upon to 'reverence her husband.' This includes respect for his greater strength as he protects and provides for her. Otherwise they are equal in value and all rights.

It goes without saying that this bond is the planned and proper way of continuing the human race to populate the earth. The breakdown of marriage and broken families can only cause difficulties, and tragedies, for all those involved. This breaking down has greatly increased in our lifetimes. It is to the point that at least 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. There are also very many single parents, and even same-sex marriages. Many children are also abused and abandoned. The results can be loosely categorized as negative, destructive, sometimes disastrous and tragic.

Next, Paul continues with respect to children, their responsibilities as well as that of the parents. Also, the relationship of masters and servants is described. Also, the Christian's armour is explained.

Ephesians - Lesson VIII

Chapter 6. Rules for children and servants. Christian armour, necessity of prayer, and watchfulness.

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- 2 Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;
- 3 that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
- 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- 5 ¶ Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;
- 6 not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;
- 7 with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:
- 8 knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.
- 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

The Whole Armor of God

- 10 ¶ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
- 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- 15 and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 16 above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
- 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;
- 19 and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,
- 20 for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Final Greetings

- 21 ¶ But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tych'icus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:
- 22 whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Ephesians - Lesson VIII continued

23 ¶ Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

¶Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus.

Verse 1.

In the Lord, children should obey their parents. As Christian parents should raise their children with the love that God gave them through Christ. The children, having faith that their parents call upon them to their best possible benefit, must follow their guidance in all things. This is best and right.

Verses 2,3.

Of the 10 Commandments, honor they father and mother is the first one that includes a positive, a promise in this case, of long life. This is the fifth commandment. See Deuteronomy 5:16 and Exodus 20:12.

In addressing the children directly, Paul must have expected this letter to be read to the whole congregation, including the children. Obedience by faith must be included for many things the children may not understand that they will be told to do. The commandment calls for more than simple obedience. It adds respect and esteem as proper towards those above us in authority; this is God's arrangement. As Creator of earth and men, God planned what the best way of living was. The bond between man and wife made them work together, both benefiting, and then the natural increase of the human race.

As the parents raised their children according to God's directions, the bond of love and mutual best benefit continues. All things are positive, fruitful, and mutually beneficial, thus continuing life, doing well for a long time. God's plan is always beneficial to man.

Verse 4.

A negative tendency must be avoided. To punish a child in anger, severely goes beyond what required 'correction', or redirecting the child to the proper path. It is wrong to allow this in yourself and will only engender anger and resentment in response. The Godly motive is affectionate concern for the best present and future welfare of the child, not punishment. That is proper for mature, adult criminals who have chosen that path. Children are growing and must be nourished in body, mind, and spirit. What is best to eat, and how often, what is the best understanding of nature, society, culture, and our proper place in it, and what our proper relationship and responsibility to God is. God's word is the best guide in all areas based on what is best and true. To be healthy physically, morally, and spiritually is the product of being nurtured and admonished of the Lord. (Kept on the right and true path.)

Verse 5.

Servant would include anyone bound to work for another, for a

Ephesians - Lesson VIII continued

time or for life. It is right to honorably obey the bosses according to their specific tasks. These are neutral, material, fleshly things that do not affect your faith in Christ. They have legal authority over you and can secure punishment you for your disobedience. This possibility can cause fear and trembling. This must not be your most important motive to obey, but to do what is your best, even as you would do as serving Christ.

Verse 6.

Eye-service is a way of saying that you only do what is right when someone is watching. This is to keep them pacified while behind their backs you do the opposite (unfaithful, hypocritical, evil). As you recognize that God reads the hearts of men, so as Christians you recognize your responsibility of doing what Christ, in the will of God, calls upon you to do.

Verse 7.

Service is therefore natural and proper in God's order of things and should be done with good will toward others because this is God's will and calling for you. It pleases Him.

Verse 8.

If a person does his best work, even if they don't get rewarded equal to their efforts by their boss or master, the Lord will still reward that person equally to those efforts. This is regardless of whether the person was hired or owned (as a slave).

Verse 9.

Even a slave-owner (master) is responsible to treat their slaves in an honorable and respectful manner. Keep in mind that you are God's servant, as under His authority. You are equally valuable to Him, even as are those under your authority - no more, no less. He has 'no respect of persons.' Specifically hold back (forbear) on making angry threats of punishment for misdeeds or mistakes. Mercy should supersede punishment. Yet, even so, God will deal with you in the same manner.

Verse 10.

In the previous verses, Paul laid out in detail the high calling of every Christian in the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel. Now, he must delineate the situation that Christians will face daily out in the world. Then, he describes all that we have in Christ to stand and overcome that world.

It will take power beyond any of human origin. It is only God's mighty power which indwells every believer that gives strength spiritually to stand against all odds.

Verse 11.

Paul describes these struggles in terms of war. We have a most serious adversary - the devil. He is crafty and underhanded - tricky. For protection we need spiritual armor. Paul describes the armor common to front-line troops of his time (Roman) - helmet, breastplate, shield, sword, metal boots.

Ephesians - Lesson VIII continued

Verse 12.

The close-quarter combat Paul likens to wrestling, but he emphasizes that this description is representing spiritual struggles, not of 'flesh and blood' bodies. The opposition includes principalities (or chief rulers of their own kingdom) with authority (powers) that have charge of the dark forces of evil of this earthly world. These forces (fallen angels - demons) work to tempt and keep humans involved in all nature of sins, to their utter destruction.

The spiritual wickedness in high places or heavenly things are the other battlefields that work to corrupt and destroy all things of God and the Gospel, all faith, love, holiness, and so forth. The methods can be observed throughout all history as recorded in the Bible and can be seen all around us today. The purity and simplicity of God's plan of salvation in Christ is still believed by millions, and continues to be spread, but is less and less acknowledged or mentioned in the general culture or media.

Verse 13.

Paul's advice is just as relevant today - 'Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God...' Because of the enemies, you are provided with armor and a weapon. The armor will make you invulnerable and able to stand, to hold your ground in this world of evil and 'in the evil day'. You will be always ready to ward off any new attack.

Verse 14.

Imagine yourself as standing ready to dress yourself with armor as a soldier prepared for battle. The first thing is the wide belt (or girdle) of the truth of the Gospel of God. All faith and confidence is founded in this truth.

The second thing is the breastplate of righteousness. This covers the major vital organs, heart and lungs, the bowels. Spiritually, it represents the righteousness provided by God through Christ, and the principle of a holy life empowered and guided by the indwelling Spirit of God in the heart of man, in thought and action.

Verse 15.

The feet must be protected, and the legs with them, to be able to both stand and move. These represent the Gospel of peace. The preparation could include being always ready to stand or move in the manner set forth by the Gospel, the firm and solid strength of faith in the Gospel, the confidence of walking in the obedience of the high-calling of the Gospel as on the path to heaven.

Here Paul writes 'the Gospel of peace' as it uniquely brings peace between God and man, open and including all of creation. This is God's love and compassion and plan of redemption from before the beginning, until after the end of time, and into eternity.

Verse 16.

The greatest protection is the shield - this particular one is the 'thureos' or tall, rectangular shape that protects the entire body. It was slightly curved, as to better protect the front of the body. This represents the faith in which all of God's gifts are

Ephesians - Lesson VIII continued

accepted, the absolute and certain belief in the historical and spiritual things that God has given to man through His only begotten Son - His life of perfect obedience, His sacrificial death for our sins, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension unto God in Heaven, and His giving the Holy Spirit to every believer. This is absolutely the strongest shield against anything the old liar can throw at us. The darts of those times would include arrows, spears, or any other missile (rocks etc.) Fiery darts refer to arrows with a flame attached which would start a fire or anything combustible that it stuck to (such as a wooden or hide-covered shield). The Roman shields were commonly covered on the front with metal and so not combustible.

The wicked darts suggest evil thoughts and temptations toward fleshly passions, but they are not dwelt upon or acted on because the faith in Christ quenches or shields the believer from them. They are recognized and put aside, being obvious and powerless.

Verse 17.

The helmet protects the head, the center of sight, and mind, from any blows. Spiritually the faith and hope of salvation protect the person's thinking from contrary or confusing temptations. The gifts and promises of God are certain in the present and unto eternity - impenetrable and as strong as the indwelling Spirit.

The aggressive weapon is the sword - of the spirit. The Holy Spirit works both in and through the Word of God. This means wielding the eternal and unchanging truth of God in the Holy Scriptures can cut apart any falsehood, mixed or misleading doctrine, or other snares of the adversary. The person wielding the Word has unlimited confidence that God's truth is eternal and will continue to fulfill every purpose of His eternal plan, even as He has brought to pass His provision for our salvation through Jesus. This shows how important it is for every believer to know Scripture.

Verse 18.

Now the Christian has been completely armed. Prayer is also necessary in the preparation of the mind, heart, and spirit for being in communication and consciousness of God, His presence, providence, and power. Thus is the believer in constant prayer, always ready to speak or act (persevere). And also, to be lifting up and encouraging fellow believers.

'Praying always with all prayer' strongly suggests this constant attitude of prayer of each individual, rather than formal or public prayer. It also includes prayer in every circumstance of life, alone, with family, while traveling, and so forth. Supplication means continued prayer, pleading for certain conditions or situations to be resolved for the best positive outcome.

It is essential that prayer be in or through the Holy Spirit, from the heart, to be strengthened thereby. To be alert, watchful, on guard for all opportunity to avoid evil, and to be helpful to others.

Verse 19.

They are asked to pray for Paul, to be given ample opportunity to defend himself in a court by his freely witnessing to the truth of

Ephesians - Lesson VIII continued

his life as God's ambassador and representative of the great gift of God in Christ. His life as Christ's missionary spoke volumes of God's will and work in Paul's life. He wishes to speak boldly the things concerning the doctrines of the Gospel that were not fully revealed previously. This he called the mystery of the Gospel.

Verse 20.

Of being in chains because of who he represents (as ambassador) he doesn't complain. His only desire is to be allowed to freely proclaim his whole testimony. This only because of the importance of the Gospel.

Verse 21.

Paul also wishes to keep this Church (as well as other Churches under his care) informed concerning how he is doing. Tychicus, a beloved brother, will be communicating to them. He is mentioned in Acts 20:4 as a helpful companion of Paul (also mentioned in Colossians 4:7, Titus 3:12, 2 Timothy 4:12), a constant and responsible minister of the Lord.

Verse 22.

He has already been sent from Rome to inform them of his affairs and bring them comfort. The comfort was in how God was working through Paul, even in tribulation (bonds) to spread the Gospel. It was a spreading of the seed (the Word of Truth) and a bearing of fruit (as converting those that heard and believed). And this even in the huge capital of the Roman Empire.

Verse 23.

In closing, he wishes them peace and love from God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. They must continue in unity with God and each other, to prosper and grow in strength and sharing their faith and love.

Verse 24.

It is the unmerited grace of God that provided the way of salvation through His beloved Son. That love has been accepted and returned by all those that believe in sincerity in our Lord Jesus Christ. This returned love is the best and certain evidence of conversion. Their good fruit shall follow them, the greatest of which is unselfish love.

Amen! As the seal of He Who made the promises and brings them to pass.

The subscription - 'Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus.' No commentary is needed.

Finis

Philippians - Lesson I

Introduction.

Philippi was in Macedonia near the northernmost part of the Aegean Sea. Thessalonica was the nearest city, to the west. It had been conquered by Philip, king of Macedonia (father of Alexander the Great), and named after himself. In Roman times, it was enlarged as a Roman colony first by Julius Ceasar, then later by Augustus.

About 53 A.D. Paul had a night vision of a man from Macedonia calling for Paul's help. He was at Troas, then journeyed to his next stop at Philippi. He was the first to preach the Gospel there. (Acts 16:9 and etc.) Lydia was one of his early converts and became his strong supporter, as did the growing Church. They were the main one that sent him supplies, even when he was working for other Churches.

The date of this letter is most likely near the end of 62 A.D. This was about a year after the letter to the Ephesians. He had now been a prisoner at Rome for a considerable time. There had been communication to and from Paul during this period. Epaphroditus had been with Paul. He had been sick and the Church had deep concern for him, the one person and situation mentioned in this letter (2:26). Paul describes his situation of near its conclusion, to be delivered, or condemned. He relates being without Timothy in 2:23,24. Acts records his being in Rome two whole years in his own hired house.

Chapter 1, verses 1-11. Paul greets them with grace and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ, and expresses great thankfulness for their faith and growth in the Lord.

Salutation

1 Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ,
 ¶ To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Phil'ippi, with the bishops and deacons:
 2 ¶ Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Prayer for the Philippian Christians

3 ¶ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,
 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;
 6 being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:
 7 even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.
 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.
 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;
 10 that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ;
 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Philippians - Lesson I continued

Verse 1.

Paul mentions Timotheus in his opening to this Church as his present companion in Rome (2:19) and important to him. Timothy had also been with Paul on his two previous visits to their city: Acts 16, and 20, therefore well-known and affectionately thought of. That Paul doesn't call himself an apostle in his opening suggests that his apostolic authority has never been questioned. This applies to Thessalonians and Philemon also.

He greets all the saints together, and mentions the bishops and deacons in particular as those leaders who looked after the ministry and looking after the needs of the less fortunate. Some have questioned the use of 'bishops' in the plural as misleading since the presence of only one bishop was the norm. Paul's intent was to address the 'overseers' (as used in the New International Version translation) or bishops to include more than one at that time and place. They would be the ones receiving this letter and also the ones to read it to the church assembly.

Verse 2.

May they continue to experience God's grace. This is unmerited favor, both powerful and active in providing blessings and especially spiritual gifts. Peace is in unity and harmony - what binds together. It must also be maintained by equality and good order, affection, and mutual praying. The ultimate is peace with God through reconciliation and forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. This peace 'passeth all understanding' (Philemon 4:7).

Both come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3.

Whenever he remembers them, he thanks God for them. They were uniquely very supportive to him spiritually and materially. God is praised for how He has so beneficially worked among them.

Verse 4.

Paul also continually includes them in his every prayer, and this with joy, knowing God will continue to bless them.

Verse 5.

Their fellowship in the Gospel, from the first day of their conversion, was continued with unity and mutual affection. Their fellowship also included working and reaching out to others. Communion among themselves and communication with others.

Verse 6.

Paul has all confidence 'that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ...' God will bring them through, He will carry and support them all the way to His Kingdom.

Verse 7.

It is completely just and proper for him to think of them in this way because he deeply loves and affectionately remembers them in his heart. Most recently they had sent Epaphroditus to help him 'in

Philippians - Lesson I continued

his bonds', in his necessities (2:25). They gave of their substance (4:14) and their motive was pure: to aid him in defense of the faith and confirmation in their affection and actions to stand for and defend their likewise heartfelt love of the Gospel and all that are in need of help. God is well pleased with them. They are partakers of God's grace.

Verse 8.

God is his witness, that he has the strongest love and affection for them. He describes this love as like that of Christ when He gave up His life for all people. Paul is also prepared to give up his life for them in faith, in the bond of love and truth of that faith in Jesus Christ. (2:17.)

Verse 9.

Paul's continual prayer is their growth and maturity in the faith, which will be shown by the ever increasing of their love to God, to fellow believers, and to all others. To abound can be described as a river swelling, passing over its former boundaries (the traditional banks), and spreading ever more into all adjacent territories.

In knowledge - especially concerning God, His nature and His expectations, His blessings and plans for His children in the Gospel. In judgment includes the ability to recognize the spiritual values and moral imperatives and follow them. Also the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit to make Godly choices to be so grounded in your faith that only sensible and loving choices are made to the glory of God.

Verse 10.

This brings you to the point of perceiving the very best, the more excellent way of doing things. The better we know the Father and what He expects of us, the better we know how to speak and act as we represent Him in this world, even as Christ. This includes sincerity. The word (from the Greek) comes from the idea of purity, as can only be seen in the brightest sunlight. The Latin word comes from the idea of honey purified to remove all wax from the honeycomb. This means a soul without spot or blemish, no shadow of turning. This will have no offense to God or neighbor, even until we stand before Christ after the Rapture.

Verse 11.

The righteousness and its fruits that Paul is writing about is the whole work of the Holy Spirit within the believers. The fruits include the attitude of temperance and benevolence, speech of kindness and love and truth, actions that reflect God's glory and loving-kindness, and that do good to others. One is to be filled up, all the way full to the brim so that they will spill over and permeate all thoughts, words, and actions with those fruits. All these things are given to us through the power of God's grace through Jesus Christ, His Gospel and His Spirit. As a believer shares his bounteous God-given fruit, he does so in praise of all that God has done and continues to do to bless believers and spread that love and

Philippians - Lesson I continued

Salvation to others. Notice that these fruits are natural products of spiritual growth, maturity, and overflow into the fruits of righteousness. All relate to glorifying God and helping others. Unfortunately, throughout history, many people choose to be self-righteous, to be above, better than others. Their fruit dries up and is held onto, both dried up and worthless, full of pride. This is the direct opposite of all that Paul teaches.

Next, Paul relates how his present situation (being in bonds) has become a way to further spread and speak for the Gospel, and has made other believers bold to speak the word.

Philippians - Lesson II

Chapter 1, verses 12-30. Bonds benefit the spread of the Gospel.

To Me to Live Is Christ

12 ¶ But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

14 and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 ¶ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16 the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 ¶ For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

27 ¶ Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

30 having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Verse 12.

Turning their attention back on himself, Paul described his present circumstances. It has brought about an opportunity to speak freely and openly about the Gospel while a prisoner in Rome. Apparently, by this time, he has been called to give account for himself and many that would otherwise not hear this truth were in the

Philippians - Lesson II continued

presence of this hearing, where he was allowed to speak freely.

Verse 13.

This public hearing made known why he was in bonds, and of his defense even into the highest places of power (the palace, etc.) and throughout the rest of the city of Rome. The pratorium was the courtroom in the palace, the emperor's dwelling place. Even to his household the news had traveled. In 4:22, it is mentioned that there were Christians even in the Emperor's household.

Verse 14.

Many other believers were greatly encouraged to speak of their faith without fear since Paul had so openly been allowed to be heard, even as a prisoner. To speak the word signifies the doctrines of Christ, the Word of God, the Word of the Lord.

Verse 15.

Unfortunately, there also were some that distorted the Gospel out of envy, causing strife. Most likely this would have been Judaizers who demanded the adherence to the Mosaic Law also. They would naturally denounce Paul in the Jewish community at Rome as an enemy of the Law and Prophets. They no doubt tried to discredit him to the Romans also, as a rebel and troublemaker. They went so far as proclaiming Christ as Messiah but with stipulations. Others had a kindly attitude toward Paul and preached Christ with good will, positive and helpful.

Verse 16.

Pointing again at the Judaizers, he says that their preaching of Christ is of contention. They included what served their purpose, not with sincerity, not with the whole truth - while adding circumcision and the Law of works. This really was very disheartening to Paul, for he was a prisoner. He was unable to face them directly, and show them to be false and destructive to the Gospel of the gift of Salvation without works.

Verse 17.

Others, out of love and admiration of Paul, sincerely proclaimed the true Gospel to show in public that many others believed as Paul had proclaimed in his defense of the Gospel.

Verse 18.

What is Paul's response to these different ways Christ is being presented - whether in pretense (or partially), or the whole truth? He is happy unto rejoicing that as Christ's Name is being heard in places never before reached. Even this would lead to further inquiry, and the furtherance of the Gospel. Paul is rejoicing and will continue to do so.

Verse 19.

That the truth about Christ is being spoken, that His kingdom is not on this earth, then Paul is no threat to Caesar and lead to his being no longer under arrest or suspicion (his deliverance or

Philippians - Lesson II continued

salvation). The Jews had denounced Paul as an enemy to Caesar. Once Paul tells the court that his Gospel includes giving tribute to Caesar, the present governing authority, it would be recognized as no threat. Paying this tribute was Christ's own direction. Paul asks the Philippians to continue praying for him to keep him strong, with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. This would continue to be essential to carry him through his infirmities, and different trials that his persecutors and government entities would put him through.

Verse 20.

Paul had 'earnest expectation', great confidence that God was present with him and would continue to be supporting him through his time of testing. Paul will continue to speak boldly, testifying to the Gospel of God's Grace and salvation through Christ. Paul was going to stand for Christ no matter the outcome, whether he was pardoned or put to death. His priority was not any effort to preserve his own life, but to glorify God and Christ.

Verse 21.

His life belongs to Christ, as His witness and ambassador as long as he lives. If he is put to death, his present trials and afflictions will also cease and he will be with Christ in heaven, which is great gain.

Verse 22.

If his life is spared for now, his purpose and labor will be to continue preaching and teaching. The fruit of that labor will be to God's glory and proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. If it was left to him to make the choice, he doesn't know which he would choose.

Verse 23.

He is stuck between these choices. Part of him desires to depart (to die) and be in heaven with Christ. This is better, and a place of rest - home.

Verse 24.

Nevertheless, he is willing to 'abide in the flesh', so he can continue to help them in their new faith, to strengthen and encourage them.

Verse 25.

Paul was, at this time, convinced that his work was not yet complete, that he would be able to continue his ministry. In fact, after having been two years a prisoner at Rome, they mature in the faith as they learn more and more about God, His plan and blessings through Christ. As their faith increases so will their joy, in the peace and love and security in being God's children, forever.

Verse 26.

They will experience greater joy in Christ, because it looked like Paul was going to be executed, but now he will be coming to be

Philippians - Lesson II continued

with them again.

Verse 27.

Paul calls upon them to act according to their being representatives of Christ and His Gospel as this Church. They must walk worthy of their calling.

He expects them to do this whether he actually ever gets to be with them or not. He does expect to hear about how they are doing and that they will 'stand fast in one spirit, with one mind', working in unity toward their central purpose, to glorify God by living as God's children in Christ. They must be empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit. Thus they can work against any adversaries together, as one.

Verse 28.

They must remain strong, and not afraid of those against them. Apparently they were under some kind of persecution at that time. Most likely idol worshipers were calling the Christians foolish, wrong, deluded, and headed toward destruction (perdition). On the contrary, what these heathens called false were actually the very evidences of their salvation, their faith being in the one true God and His provision, which is in Christ Jesus, certain and eternal.

Verse 29.

Paul calls upon them to graciously accept any suffering in behalf of Christ. This is an honor and privilege given by God only to those of strong and faithful service to His Son. God has purpose in this to their benefit, and as a witness to others. God will carry you through according to His eternal purpose. There is therefore no reason to fear your adversaries.

Verse 30.

When Paul was at Philippi preaching the Gospel, he had been arrested, beaten, put in prison with his feet in the stocks (Acts 16:19-40). They had been there and witnessed these things. They are now informed that he is again under arrest, a prisoner sent to Rome in bonds to be tried for his life. They must always keep in mind that it was not for any wrong or evil doing that they and Paul were being persecuted, but for their faith in Christ. By this they honor Christ as the Truth, the Way, and the Life. They glorify God. And so also will they be honored by God and Christ at His appearing. They are to take comfort that God was with them in similar circumstances as he was in also at that same time.

Next, Paul exhorts them to live according to the Spirit of the Gospel, unselfish love towards others, even as Christ gave up so much to become a human, in order to redeem people, even sacrificial love.

Finis.

Philippians - Lesson III

Chapter 2. Live according to the Spirit of unselfish love, even as Christ.

Christ's Humiliation and Exaltation

1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,
 2 fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.
 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
 6 who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
 7 but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shining as Lights in the World

12 ¶ Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling:
 13 for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.
 14 ¶ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:
 15 that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;
 16 holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.
 17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.
 18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 ¶ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.
 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.
 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.
 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.
 23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.
 24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

Philippians - Lesson III continued

25 ¶ Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphrodi'tus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

30 because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Verse 1.

'If' does not express doubt but affirmation. There is consolation in Christ, as there is comfort in love. Paul is calling upon them in Christ's Name to exercise and express the love they have experienced as shed abroad in their hearts by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He is expressing his whole-hearted love for them, and desires that they share that love in fellowship with him.

The expression of that love brings comfort to those in distress of any kind and fellowship in all circumstances (bowels and mercies).

Verse 2.

He wishes them to be like-minded, having the same thoughts of love to God, His Gospel and His ministry through him as his love to God, the Gospel and these, his spiritual children. This is true unity, 'being of one accord, of one mind.' This is the focus of their conversation, their thinking, their actions. This is what fulfills Paul's joy. They are partaking of all the blessings provided by God through Christ, and this through the Apostle to the Gentiles. The best product and evidence is this unselfish, unifying love.

Verse 3.

A warning - watch for the motives - do not allow things done in disagreement: strife, or to put on a show for acclaim, popularity, or a reason for boasting or vain-glory. All things must be done for the benefit of everyone. Consider others as better than yourselves and more worthy of love and honor. This will maintain humility and keep you from going in the other direction.

Verse 4.

One's thinking must not be focused on one's self and one's own abilities or gifts to be benefited from. Also give attention, honor, and praise for those things that others are doing in the Church and to glorify God, in spreading the Gospel.

Verse 5.

The greatest model and ideal example is found in Christ. We must follow His thinking to perceive the importance and absolute truth of His mission to man, for man.

Philippians - Lesson III continued

Verses 6,7.

Before His incarnation, He was in the form of God, visibly the brightness of the Father's glory (Hebrews 1:3; John 17:5) and equal with God from eternity with power, and authority. The word 'robbery' here adds that His equality for glory was not something He thought of as to be grabbed onto, coveted, or even desired. This leads into His choice to become a lowly human being. His deity covered over by human flesh in appearance like every other human, with no attendant reputation or value, the form of a servant.

Verse 8.

His attitude was of total humility, seeking to serve others in this veil of flesh. He was accepted as any other human. His choice was to continue as a man, though without sin, to be obedient to God in giving up His human life by suffering the most cruel and disgraceful death as a criminal on the cross. That is how far He was willing to go to redeem man from destruction.

Verse 9.

This great Salvation that God rewarded with the highest exaltation, as the Glorified eternal Christ at His right hand. His Name is above every other, in all time, and eternity, in all places.

Verse 10.

It is so exalted that at its pronouncement - Jesus - every knee should bow - of all things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. All cognizant creatures, angels, humans, demons.

Verse 11.

Every being with a tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all creation, to the glory of God the Father. From the lowest depth to the highest height, Jesus is all in all.

Verse 12.

Keeping all this in mind, you who I dearly love, continue to live by your high-calling in motives and principles. You did so when I was with you, now, in my absence do so 'much more'. Show by your daily conversation (words and actions) that you are a saved person, bearing the demeanor and producing the fruit as a true follower of Christ, living to glorify God.

'With fear and trembling' warns of how difficult it is to maintain this path, to deal with those that oppose you, to distract or tempt you, or even destroy you. Watch and continually pray to God for His guidance and strength to stand in your faith.

Verse 13.

It is a blessed thought, and one to always have in mind, that God is in you through the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower you to right thinking, helping you choose the good and the right things to do (according to His will), for this is pleasing in His sight. God provides the power. Man uses this power to choose in God's will, and work according to that choice. This produces the evidences of that person's faith, in what others observe in their daily walk. God's

Philippians - Lesson III continued

good pleasure is to bless and empower those who sincerely are His children and honor Him.

Verse 14.

In everything you do, actively avoid all negative influences or arguments. You work for God, not to please yourself or others, or against anyone. Unity of purpose must be maintained. Be content and patient.

Verse 15.

In this way, no one can blame you for wrong-doing or causing harm to others. It is thus that a child of God is recognized. No one can rebuke you, accuse you of breaking any law or doing any harm. The midst of a crooked and perverse nation describes the majority of their present surrounding societies. This includes the heathens and all their idolatries, as well as the Jews that persecuted Christians as law breakers and rebels. This is a type of mental and spiritual darkness directly related as half-truths, outright lies and sinful behavior. The light of God's truth and those who possess it are become 'as lights in the world'. All that is love, peace, joy, forgiveness, and salvation shines. This will be seen and accepted by some and God will be glorified.

Verse 16.

It is the brightest and only light that leads to eternal life that they are holding up that others may see their way to it to obtain this greatest of all gifts that God has provided for His creatures. Think of a lighthouse in a safe harbor during a storm at night, and a ship that is lost and without hope. That light leads into the haven of eternal rest and safety and blessing.

In describing his own ministry, he uses the words run and labor. Their faithfulness validates the course of his carrying the Word of Life throughout his travels, planting and nurturing (laboring) the Churches. God has granted the increase, the fruit of Paul's labor, which will provide Paul great rejoicing on the day of Christ. All of his efforts would be accounted worthwhile.

Verse 17.

Paul describes their faith as a living sacrifice and living service offered up to God. He would gladly be the libation to be poured upon the sacrifice. This apparently would include Paul's willingness to be martyred for their sakes. This unity in and dedication to the Lord is joyful and must be openly expressed to them.

Verse 18.

He also acknowledges that they must also be experiencing this same joy and they rejoice at the same time, in the same Spirit with him.

Verse 19.

Above all things, in all circumstances, Paul trusts in the Lord Jesus as he plans to shortly send Timotheus to them and brings back a

Philippians - Lesson III continued

good report of their present circumstances in the Church - unity and fellowship.

Verse 20.

This man has the same loving and sincere concern for their doing well in their new-found faith and growing and maturing as Paul has. He is the only one so concerned.

Verse 21.

Paul has observed so many others that look out only for themselves that he uses the word 'all'. This must include those that also preach Christ (even of envy and strife - see 1:15), but show no loving sacrifice or concern for the results. They make no sacrifices and have no patience to nurture and give of themselves and their substances to new converts.

Verse 22.

The Philippians know well of the true nature of Timotheus as a son to him. He has labored with Paul in his Gospel ministry. He had been there with Paul, mentioned in Acts 16:1-3, and 17:14. He served with Paul as laboring together in word and doctrine.

Verse 23.

Now in captivity, Paul's trial seems to be soon and he would wait for the outcome before sending Timotheus. He, though not certain, seems to think he will be spared at this time.

Verse 24.

He trusts in the Lord, that shortly he will be free to also come to visit them.

Verse 25.

In the meantime, he had sent Epaphroditus to them, as he thought necessary. Paul regards him very highly as a Christian brother, a fellow laborer and soldier in spreading the Gospel through many difficulties, and even danger from those strongly opposed to their ministry. He had been with Paul on many occasions and had provided comfort and support in his time of need. He had shown the strength of his faith by the fruit of his joint ministry with Paul. He was a worthy messenger to them.

Verse 26.

He had longed to be with them for some time, but he had been very sick. He was saddened that they had heard of his illness.

Verse 27.

No description of the malady but that it left him 'nigh unto death'. Whatever it was, it was beyond Paul's ability to help or heal. God's mercy is named as what brought Epaphroditus through. Paul is very thankful to God for sparing him this additional sorrow.

Verse 28.

In order to more quickly relieve them of their sorrow over his

Philippians - Lesson III continued

sickness, Paul sent him as quickly as possible to bring them great occasion to rejoice over his recovery. Paul also expresses his feeling of relief from his own sorrow about this closest of companions and brethren in the Lord.

Verse 29.

Receive him gladly in the Lord, as God has honored him, so also you must honor (as one of good Christian reputation).

Verse 30.

As he was working to honor and support Paul, he was not concerned about his own welfare, even willing to give up his life, and indeed, he nearly did die. The Philippians could have helped Paul, but because they hadn't, Epaphroditus had ministered intensely, nigh unto death.

Next, the call to rejoice in the Lord, and beware of false teachers, who try to pervert the Gospel, to add works (the Judaisers especially) to faith.

Philippians - Lesson IV

Chapter 3. Paul calls on them to rejoice in the Lord, and beware of false teachers. The true circumcision is of the heart.

Pressing toward the Mark

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

2 ¶ Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 ¶ Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 ¶ Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like

Philippians - Lesson IV continued

unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Verse 1.

Let your joy be centered in the Lord, fellow and beloved believers. There is a very good reason for Paul to write the essential doctrines of the Gospel as a record. This allows them to not depend on only their own memory (these essential truths) and not also possibly be corrupted. 'The same things' refers to what Paul had previously preached and taught them. He considers writing these things as no burden (not grievous) but for their benefit, that their faith be safe (clearly recorded).

Verse 2.

Formerly, Jews labeled Gentiles as dogs because they were considered a lower form of life. The Jews were the Chosen People, the Covenant People of The Most High God. Paul now calls the Jews dogs for having rejected the New Covenant (or Testament) of God in Christ. The evil workers are those that try to attach conditions and works to the freedom of the Gospel, thereby denying the Savior Who had redeemed them. This is only negative and destructive, causing only confusion, strife, and distress. Paul uses the word concision to show the condition of the Jews who claimed great merit in their circumcision. Now, having rejected Christ, that former rite only shows the cutting of their flesh, and their rejection of the New Testament.

Verse 3.

Christians are now the people of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus by the circumcision of the heart, not the only outward sign of cut flesh. All confidence, faith, and hope are in worshiping in spirit and in truth, praising our Savior, rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

Verse 4.

Here, Paul turns his attention to the whole problem of these Judaizers boasting of all their Jewish social and religious inheritance and attainments. Paul calls them fleshly or worldly attributes. He suggests that all these things they brag about don't even measure up to the similar attributes that he himself can claim. He has more reasons to trust in these worldly things than they do.

Verse 5.

From the beginning, at 8 days old, he was circumcised as prescribed in the Mosaic Law (Genesis 17:14) for descendants of Jacob (the stock of Israel), of the tribe of Benjamin that did not revolt or turn to idolatry. His parents were both Hebrews, and only Hebrews in his entire family line. As a Pharisee he went beyond acceptance of the law, to study, teach, and scrupulously follow it.

Verse 6.

As his countrymen knew, his zeal for the Law had led him to formerly persecute the Church of Christ. He was concentrating on earning his own righteousness by obedience to the law. He can claim

Philippians - Lesson IV continued

that from his youth he has so carefully followed the law that no one could dispute it. He says he was 'blameless'. All this could have been used to push himself forward as better than all these Judaizers, and their boasting - that he was a better Jew from the worldly point of view.

Verse 7.

But what 'was' is no longer of any value to him. They no longer have any benefit. What he had been trying to earn, to please God, he could never have actually succeeded. But Christ had done what no person could have, and paid the price for every person's salvation. To gain Christ was above all. Now he counted all things of the earth and of the flesh to be worthless.

Verse 8.

Once Paul counted on all his earthly advantages, successes, prestige, position, and power as a Pharisee among God's chosen people, the Jews. Also, any other thing of value in the world. They no longer have any value to him and are willingly given up because of the ultimate and greatest, and most excellent thing he has ever found in his life - the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Jesus in His Gospel brought justification through His death on the cross, the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the inheritance as a child of God of eternal glory. Paul has given up, walked away from all of his worldly status, and what most people call necessities (home, land, family, job, friends, etc.). In comparison, they have no pain, remorse, or regrets for their loss.

The worth of Christ is beyond all things of this world, including other people, religious systems or any other creature. What Christ brings is salvation from the penalty of sin and the glorious blessings of being a child of God even unto eternity. Paul has no doubts, his life is his witness to the truth of the Gospel and the changes it has brought him through to his present state of peace, joy, contentment and love for the lost and for preaching.

Verse 9.

Again, Paul emphasizes that he takes no credit for his own actions, and can claim no righteousness, or success in working for his own salvation, or trust in what he could do in fulfilling the Law. He places all of his faith and trust in what Christ has done. Paul has accepted the finished work of Christ, and the power of His resurrection. It is therein that he will remain. Justification by faith in God's plan to grant forgiveness to sinners through the righteousness and substitutionary death of Christ.

Verse 10.

The greatest value is to know Him as the promised Messiah, to experience so great a salvation. And to know the power of His resurrection unto eternal glory.

The fellowship of His sufferings, and conformable to His death. Paul was willing to die for the truth of the Gospel, even as Christ had. This included all other persecution, imprisonment, punishment, and privation Paul suffered. All was worth it to rise to glory and

Philippians - Lesson IV continued

honor in the Lord.

Verse 12.

This will not take place in the body on earth. To describe the glory and blessing as provided in Christ, Paul uses the words related to Olympic contests. His efforts continue as in a race, pursuing the goal, the finish line. Others had finished the race and gone on unto the great prize of glory in the presence of Christ. Christ had called him into this race to faithfully complete the course.

Verse 13.

Addressing fellow believers, Paul again emphasizes that he has not yet laid hold of that which Christ had taken hold of him to do. His life and all effort is focused on the remaining path before him, which also means that no time or thought is to be wasted by looking back. All effort is reaching for those things in front of us. His life will be complete when he finishes his course (or race) and receives his crown and glorified body in heaven.

Verse 14.

It is not time to slow down as the race ends, when the finish line is in sight. All effort must continue (pressing toward the mark). The prize is the reward that God has called him to receive through Christ Jesus. He was called to faithfully persevere to his last breath in serving God.

Verse 15.

Paul now turns to his readers. Those who have a mature understanding of the Gospel (to be of the same mind as Paul, he calls being perfect). They should also focus their efforts toward the goal of finishing their course, focused on the prize of eternal life. If anything in this world still distracts them or slows them down, God will reveal this to them to be dealt with properly.

Verse 16.

Paul refers to walking by the same 'rule'. This is the white line that marks the course of a race. To stay in the race, one must stay on and follow the line to the finish. They have already followed the course a certain distance and must stay on course or their attainment would be lost, of no value. Focus, keep thinking and pursuing the same goal.

Verse 17.

Paul holds forth his life's labor as their guide to follow. Let his example be their 'line' to follow in the Christian's life. They are to observe others that are also walking the Christian 'line' as examples of how they are to live.

Verse 18.

A warning - there are others that Paul has repeatedly warned them about that appear among Christian gatherings (many walk) that are there to sidetrack and deceive the true believers. It brings Paul great sorrow to acknowledge this 'weeping'. They are attempting to

Philippians - Lesson IV continued

burden believers with works of Jewish law, rites, and traditions. They are plainly enemies of the cross of Christ. By requiring salvation to be earned, they deny the value and purpose of Christ's sacrificial death. They seek power and influence and are self-righteous and proud of it.

Verse 19.

Their goals are all of an earthly nature. 'Their belly', all self satisfaction. The reality of their reward is destruction. What they thought their greatest achievements (their 'glory') will be accounted as shameful before God. It saddened Paul because these men mislead believers, but also because they were deluded, deceived and lost themselves and were working for their own destruction.

Verse 20.

Refocus on the highest note. Christians lives are headed toward and becoming more attuned to the kind of life to be experienced there. The rules and laws of the heavenly city in the presence of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. There, in the New Jerusalem we have rights and privileges, and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Verse 21.

The imperfect and corrupt body of flesh and blood will be changed to be like the glorious body of Christ, immortal and full of light (glory). This is accomplished by the same immeasurable power of the Creator and Sustainer of 'all things'. In the beginning was the Word, beyond all endings is the Word.

Next, chapter 4. Paul continues advising believers as to how they are to behave towards one another.

Philippians - Lesson V

Chapter 4. Stand fast.

Rejoice in the Lord

1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

2 ¶ I beseech Eu-o'di-as, and beseech Syn'tyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 ¶ Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Think on These Things

8 ¶ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Acknowledgment of the Philippians' Gift

10 ¶ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 ¶ Notwithstanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in Thessaloni'ca ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphrodi'tus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Philippians - Lesson V continued

Final Greetings

21 ¶ Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

23 ¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Verse 1.

'Therefore' connects this verse with those preceding as the conclusion. Paul is calling his dearly beloved brethren, who he longed for to stand fast in the Lord as they practice all the previous teaching. He ends with the same terms of endearment.

Verse 2.

Two pious women of this church are addressed as Paul requests them individually to come together and be in agreement in the Lord. Any previous disagreements to be put aside, for the Lord's sake.

Verse 3.

Apparently, some women of that church had worked with Paul in spreading the Gospel, most likely to other women and their families. He wants them to be helped by Clement and the other men that also assisted him. All are recognized as Christians 'whose names are in the book of life.'. Clement is thought to be the one who was later the bishop of Rome, and who wrote a letter to the Church at Corinth, which has come down to us.

Verse 4.

In the Lord, they are always able to rejoice in what He has done for them, and what He will continue to do. He is utterly and always trustworthy. Nothing and no one on earth can come close, therefore rejoice always.

Verse 5.

They should be known by their moderation, no excesses of the worldly sort. This includes patience gentleness, meekness, restraint, and forgiving. This may be directed towards some who were known to be quarrelsome. Christ's presence in the Holy Spirit was always with believers.

Verse 6.

Do not dwell or worry over things that may or may not happen. Worry is not able to change anything, but will have a negative effect on the warrior. Only God can be of help. As His children we are to let Him know of our needs and concerns. This is to be communicated by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. We have complete faith and trust in His love and tender care, and can rest without anxiety. This is certain and constant.

Verse 7.

Such assurance and rest in Him is peace - the peace that 'passeth all understanding'. The indwelling Holy Spirit will keep your hearts (the area of affections, emotions, passions), and minds

Philippians - Lesson V continued

(the area of understanding, logic, reason, and conscience) by communion with the Father and His Son Christ Jesus.

Verse 8.

Finally, fellow believers, you must take charge of what you think about. To maintain positive and trusting faith in God, think on the following: things that are honest, just, pure, lovely, of a good report, any virtue, anything worthy of praise. By repeating 'whatsoever things are', Paul is emphasizing each category to be thought about briefly for its own uniqueness, rather than just a list where the categories are merely recognized and passed by.

Verse 9.

Add also those things that Paul had taught them, his preaching, his writings, his example while He was living and laboring among them, and any revelation (as received from God in their new faith). These should be looked to as examples of how to be thinking, speaking, and acting, out of your faith in Christ. The peace of God, and the God of peace will be with you.

Verse 10.

Paul has experienced and now expresses the great joy that God has provided him through these Philippian believers and their kindness to him. To say their care for him flourished again points to a time in-between during which they did not. He describes in a gentle way that they had been unable to help, and thus had no opportunity.

Verse 11.

He is not saying that he had gone without basic needs. God has provided for him through all the varying circumstances of his ministry. He has learned to be content. He is fully trusting in the providence and goodness of God, Who knows best. Paul judges nothing according to fleshly or worldly standards, which are all basically selfish and self-serving.

Verse 12.

He has learned from his experiences of being in both extremes. He has learned what hardship and being in the lowest condition are, and conducts himself accordingly. He experienced God's presence and support through everything. Also, when he was bountifully provided with good things and plentiful food (to be full rather than hungry), he was also content. His patience reflected his complete trust and dependence on God's perfect will for his life.

Verse 13.

Here, he is careful to state that this contentment was not what he achieved on his own. He deserved no credit for it. His strength, empowered by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, makes it possible for him to do all things he is called upon to do and to go through.

Verse 14.

Even though he has experienced want, he compliments those who knew his present affliction, and were moved to send him provisions.

Philippians - Lesson V continued

They have done well.

Verse 15.

He reminds them that after he had first preached the Gospel to them at Philippi, he traveled from that part of Macedonia to other Churches he had founded. None of the other Churches had sent him any help or had even offered to. Only they at Philippi had both offered and also sent him help.

Verse 16

Even when he was working in Thessalonica to build up that Church, they more than once sent what he needed. I Thessalonians 2:9 and II Thessalonians 3:7-9 mention his having worked with his hands to help provide for his sustenance there. The Thessalonians had helped him very little.

Verse 17.

Paul wants them to clearly understand that he is not complimenting them with the motive to get them to send him even more. Their generosity and heart of giving was their bearing spiritual fruit that will be accounted in their favor for reward in Heaven.

Verse 18.

He has received all the bountiful gifts they sent to him by Epaphroditus. He is full, having received a plentiful supply of all necessities: food, clothing, money. He describes the gifts as from the heart that God would recognize as their offering, as sacrifice is acceptable, a sweet smell, well pleasing to God. They were offered to God by their being given to God's servant.

Verse 19.

As God moved them to help him, so God will as certainly supply all of their needs. Among the greatest blessings He will supply are from His riches in Christ Jesus, grace, peace, joy, and His tenderhearted loving-kindness for His children. His source and supply are without limit - infinite.

Verse 20.

Let us always praise and glorify God, our Heavenly Father. Through Christ we receive His blessings both now and forever. He holds us today and every day in the future in His hands. Amen. So it is, so it will be.

Verse 21.

Paul asks them to tell all the other believers in Christ of his loving concern for them. Paul's companions send their Christian greeting to them also. His companions do change from time to time.

A list follows of all his recorded fellow laborers from Acts and his letters: Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, Philemon.

Philippians - Lesson V continued

Verse 22.

All the Christians at this time that were at Rome also send Christian greetings. Included are a number of people of Caesar's household (Nero was emperor at this time). Whether this included slaves, servants, guards, or Nero's relatives is not known. The fact that Nero was a cruel persecutor of the believers in Christ did not prevent the Gospel from reaching an unknown number of his household.

Verse 23.

Paul's usual benediction: to keep always in mind and heart the grace we share in Christ Jesus our Lord - so it is, so it shall continue to be.

The subscription (sub: below; scription: writing) identifies the addressee of the letter, identified by their dwelling place: Philippi. Epaphroditus wrote it down in Rome, obviously under Paul's direction.

Colossians - Lesson I

Introduction.

A city of Phrygia in Asia Minor. Not much is known about it. It was equally distant from the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis. About a year after the writing of this epistle all three cities were destroyed by an earthquake. A city was rebuilt at Colossa, and named Konos. It still exists.

The time of this letter's writing appears to have been about the same time as the letter to the Philippians, near the end of 62 A.D. (9th year of Nero as emperor). During the three years Paul was at Ephesus (Acts 19:10), the Gospel was spread throughout Asia. Acts 16:6 mentions Paul preaching in Phrygia (Colossa - a city in this district), and Galatia. (See also Acts 18:23). It is also possible that he founded the Church there, but no clear statement to that effect is recorded.

Chapter 1, verses 1-14. Salutation and great thankfulness for condition and progress of the Church, taken from the power of darkness to glorious light of the Gospel.

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 ¶ To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colos'sae:

¶ Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

3 ¶ We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

5 for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 as ye also learned of Ep'aphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

9 ¶ For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;

12 giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Colossians - Lesson I continued

Reconciliation through Christ's Death

14 ¶ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Verse 1.

Paul identifies himself as an apostle by the will of God (a sent one, purposely, as messenger of the eternal Gospel by God Himself). Timothy, a brother in Christ, is identified here as companion and scribe for Paul of this epistle.

Verse 2.

To the faithful followers of Christ in that city (saints). He wishes them grace and peace from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3.

Thanks are always appropriate to God the provider of all that is good, whose grace as Father has produced eternal salvation through His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him they have believed and now Paul sends love toward them: this he continually expresses in praying always for them.

Verse 4.

Paul identifies this place as not having been visited by him (as also Ephesus; see Ephesians 1:15). He has only heard of their faith and the healthy condition of their gatherings where they are unified in loving relationship in Christ Jesus.

Verse 5.

They now possess the hope of eternal life according to the truth of the Gospel. This was the result of their hearing the Word of God preached. Thus Paul is thankful of their three-fold condition as Christians: they had faith, love, and hope, all centered in Christ. In the Gentile world there was no real hope, only speculation and opinion.

Verse 6.

The Gospel is represented as a traveler, that has the goal to visit all the peoples of the world. It has started in Judea, gone through Syria, parts of Asia Minor, and of late, arrived in their city. In other descriptions, the Gospel, as Good News, is carried by every apostle and believer to every direction of travel of nearly all the countries of the Roman Empire: Western Europe, Northern Africa, eastward in the furthest parts of the Near East, south towards India, Sinai, Moab, Cush (in Africa).

As in all places where the pure Gospel is preached, it 'bringeth forth fruit'. Also, every fruit containing seed, then multiplies 30, 60, or 100 fold. This was the evidence of God's salvation being received by faith, and seen in their resulting change of heart and behavior. The love of God had come into their hearts, overflowing toward others.

Colossians - Lesson I continued

Verse 7.

Ephaphras is mentioned. Some suggest this is a short form of Epaphroditus. Paul calls him his dear fellow servant. He is identified as from this city (4:12), and may have been the first one who preached the Gospel there. Here he is named their faithful minister, as one who faithfully labored among them, for them in their growth and maturing in faith and practice.

Verse 8.

This spiritual love within the Church, he had declared to Paul. This was the fruit of the Holy Spirit in them blossoming forth. This included their love and affection for Paul, and his needs.

Verse 9.

This wonderful news, Paul has continued to be grateful about, since he first was told. So he has not ceased to pray for them, to grow unto fulness of the blessings of wisdom and spiritual peace, and joy, and thankfulness for all they have from God in Christ Jesus, Lord and Savior. This suggests the flooding of the heart and soul with Divine Light, both beautiful and warm, as purest love. This puts in place all other things as to their real value and importance to the child of God.

Verse 10.

The call to all Christians as written here: 'walk worthy of the Lord'. This to be holy and useful in one's everyday life. This, in the best manner at the best time, for the best motive (unselfish love to glorify God). Paul calls for fruit, not pleasantness. They must work, produce, and all must be beneficial. As they so lived, they would also grow in experience of living with God, for Him, in His grace, His peace and confidence, and in His love, day by day. Thus knowledge (the Word) becomes understanding (the Spirit).

Verse 11.

Their strength and power come from the One Who has all power over all of creation. This blessed assurance and possession allows for all patience and living through all that comes, even suffering, with the happy understanding that God is with us, and always will be with us, through whatever comes. This certainty overcomes all circumstances. This is the experience and expectation of a child of God.

Verse 12.

With all of this in mind, we give thanks unto the Father, as all things given by His mercy and grace. We can make no claim of merit. He has provided and called us to take part in the inheritance that the saints will receive in heaven (in light).

Verse 13.

This is the opposite of darkness, which here is described as having power over the majority of the world's general societies and cultures. Only the power of God can redeem and transform a person from this darkness into the light of the kingdom of His Son, Who

Colossians - Lesson I continued

chose in His love for His own to take the path to the cross for their salvation.

Verse 14.

Christ, our Redeemer, paid the price for our sins, by His death on the cross (through His blood being shed), therefore our sins are forgiven. This includes the sins of the past, present, and future. Also, its influences and power can be resisted and overcome in the guidance and power of the in-dwelling Holy Spirit.

Colossians - Lesson II

Chapter 1, verses 15-29.

15 who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 and he is before all things, and by him all things consist:

18 and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Paul's Ministry to the Church

21 ¶ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight:

23 if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

24 who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25 whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Verse 15.

The image of the invisible God. The inaccessible light and power that no created being can look upon, was within Christ, concealed within flesh.

The first born of every creature points back to before creation, Christ was there to create all things. Before all creatures were, He is: eternal pre-existence.

Verses 16,17.

Jesus Christ, as the Word of God, spoke all things into existence: the universe, all things visible to us and also the things invisible to us, all things that had a beginning in time or eternity.

Colossians - Lesson II continued

They were also created for Him. He governs and preserves: by Him all things consist. This defines Him as God.

What we experience as creation is an effect that was brought into existence by the skill and power of the Creator so that creation only continues by the continuing of that power and energy that brought it into being.

Verse 18.

His human nature is exalted beyond all created beings. He is head of the Church (His body on earth). He is the author and dispenser of light, life and salvation, to all believers; all the mercy, love, and salvation of His Gospel is received from Him. I Corinthians 15:2 names Christ as the first-fruits of them that slept. He is the first-born from the dead. This is because He was never to experience death again. The term first-fruits means the proof that all other people would also experiences resurrection: the harvest.

Christ, with that part of the Human nature He carried with Him to heaven, is to be set above and in charge of all creation. In all things He is first and foremost.

Verse 19.

The fulness: the majesty, power, goodness, mercy, grace and love of God shown forth in Christ.

Verse 20.

Peace between God and man had only one possible remedy, the atonement for sin by the sacrifice by Christ on the cross, by the shedding of His blood. This provided for the reconciliation, always desired and planned for by the Father, but impossible to be performed by any carnal mind. The Holy Spirit influences the sinner to perceive their sin and accept the gift of salvation in Christ.

By all things in earth or in heaven suggests that those of faith before Christ, now experienced their salvation (even in heaven) by the fact of the cross, no longer just by faith from the Old Testament promises and prophecies. So also those alive on earth were reconciled by the fact of the cross. This also suggests the 'all things' included both Jews and all other persons or nations (Gentiles), as equal before God by the Gospel of Christ.

Verse 21.

This appears to be addressed to the Gentiles, as alienated and only focused on their own 'wicked works', with no thought or wish to change: thus enemies of God. And yet God provided reconciliation for them also. As enemies to God, they had other gods and lords that they looked to with whatever sacrifices, rites, and worship they included. Their thoughts and desires were of the flesh, for, of, and by themselves. God had no place in them.

Verse 22.

By Christ's incarnation, the 'Seed of the Woman', He chose to die for the sins of the world that those who believe He may present to the Father as blameless, without spot or blemish, holy. Also part is the new birth by the Holy Spirit, His love shed abroad in their

Colossians - Lesson II continued

hearts unto good works. When they are judged before God it will only be for rewards, not blame.

Verse 23.

This will be yours if you are truly and completely settled (grounded) in the Gospel of Christ, by faith. Having experienced the new birth, you will not be swayed by or led astray by false teachers. You will persevere. They have heard the Gospel and accepted it. The hope is of the resurrection, and glorification unto eternal realms of blessedness.

'To every creature which is under heaven' was a common phrase among Hebrews, referring to all human beings on the earth (Jews and Gentiles). Paul describes his ministry as being to all people, everywhere he goes. They all had opportunity to hear and believe.

Verse 24.

Paul describes his present sufferings, his being in bonds at Rome, because he preached to Gentiles and called them equal to the Jews in Christ's Church. This had started in Jerusalem where the Jews had attempted to kill him. His present circumstance was a direct result from that hatred. He can rejoice because of these Gentile believers. Every one was worth what afflictions in the flesh that he experienced. He still has some yet to go through.

All these things were like the persecution and pain leveled against all those that spoke the truth of God against the wicked world, just as Jesus had spoken against the Jews. All is for the sake of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, of which He is the Head.

Verse 25.

Paul had received a special commission from God to minister to the Gentiles. This was always part of God's plan, to offer salvation to all people in Christ Jesus. Thus the Word of God is fulfilled as predicted by the prophets and promises of the Old Testament. As the promise to Abraham that through him all the nations would be blessed.

Verse 26.

The mystery had been hidden for many generations of the Jewish people, the only chosen people of God. The mystery was that they were to be the place and people that Jesus would come to fulfill the law and die for their sins, and then the Gentiles were to be given the same offer and equal benefits, and be God's chosen people also, in Christ. (See Ephesians 3:3 etc.) All of those who had accepted the Gospel have seen and experienced this reality. All are equally His saints. He continues to call out to individuals, from every nation, people and tongue, every day, somewhere in the world.

Verse 27.

The prophecies and promises that God would show forth the 'riches of the glory' of this Gospel among the Gentiles is being accomplished before their eyes. It has been of great and glorious effect among them. The greatest is the new birth, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (which is the Spirit of Christ), the proof and down payment: the hope of glory to be eternal, in the presence of God and

Colossians - Lesson II continued

Christ.

Verse 28.

Paul now gives a potent summary of his ministry. He preaches Christ and His crucifixion. He warns every man of the danger of sin, the righteousness of God, and the sentence of death against all ungodliness and sin. Circumstances and the length of a lifetime were uncertain. Today should be the day of salvation - tomorrow is not to be taken for granted.

Paul goes on to say that they taught every man in all wisdom. The world was in ignorance and darkness. Sin clouded knowledge and judgment about God and His righteousness. They taught them about God's judgment and grace, God's mercy and forgiveness, through Christ Jesus. This was the highest wisdom concerning man himself and God. To know Christ brought peace, love, and joy, both now and forever.

Thus, at the end, each believer will stand before Christ, perfected in Him. They would be standing in the truth of all that He was, is, and ever shall be. Salvation was perfect in forgiveness, their souls indwelt by His Spirit, also perfect in purity. Every man means all people equally, the entire human race. All have sinned and thereby all need a Savior.

Verse 29.

This is Paul's total focus in life, all of His labor. His strength of body and mind are put forth in this pursuit: to fulfill the mission that God has given him. God has also strengthened him 'mightily' in all his endeavors to spread the Gospel and to save people of every kind.

Next, Chapter II. Paul gives an exhortation to steadfastness in faith, and explains why believers should beware of false believers.

Colossians - Lesson III

Chapter 2. Paul expresses great concern for all Churches to be steadfast in the face of false teachers.

1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at La-odice'a, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 ¶ As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

7 rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Dead but Risen with Christ

8 ¶ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 ¶ Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to

Colossians - Lesson III continued

ordinances,

21 (touch not; taste not; handle not;

22 which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.

Verse 1.

Paul wants those at Colossae and Laodicea, and also those who did not know him personally, to know of his deep care and concern for them. He spent time praying on their behalf in 'conflict', meaning earnest care.

Verse 2.

He greatly desires their continual rest and comfort in God. This plus the unity among all believers, in love, as in the timbers and beams of a building. They are joined or 'knit' together by the bond of love. This would show their understanding of the equality of all believers in the truth of the Gospel. This was God's design from the beginning, now being openly brought to pass. What was a mystery now is known, the Fatherhood of God and the Gospel of salvation of Christ Jesus.

Verse 3.

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in the grace and mercy and love of God's plan for man's salvation in Christ. Only God's wisdom could devise and his power could accomplish this merciful provision. What was before a mystery was now made plain in the events of human history.

Verse 4.

This is explained to prevent those believers from being deceived by subtle reasoning, from assumed premises, or false evidence. Gentile philosophies were well known for this kind of positing arguments.

Verse 5.

As his being absent from them suggests that he has some familiarity with them, knowing them as to their sound doctrine and steadfast faith in Christ. They kept good order in their fellowship. Paul is with them in spirit, and is joyful, confident in their obedience to the Gospel.

Verse 6.

What they have received by faith is Christ Jesus the Lord, their lives (their walk) must be in accordance to His example, steadfast in the Spirit of Christ, with no distractions or turning aside.

Verse 7.

A double metaphor: rooted as a sown seed takes root, spreading wide and deep, grounded as a building on a laid foundation is built. On the first, to produce much good fruit. In the second,

Colossians - Lesson III continued

upbuilding to be a place of habitation of God through the Spirit. The result will be abounding, a reaching out in gratitude and a response in loving obedience, both a growth in grace.

Verse 8.

What they had received was salvation from Christ. They must not allow anyone to take this from them by perverting and disrupting their faith in the truth of the Gospel. Philosophy was highly respected among the Greeks of the time, and it was characterized by complicated, intricate, and long winded - much ado about nothing. Yet, they distracted a person's focus into vain imaginings, related to traditions of men. Paul calls this vain deceit, related to the rudiments of the world. There were philosophies among the Jews also. The writings of the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Cabala (alternately spelled **Kabbala(h)** or **Qabala(h)**) tended to be ridiculous, absurd, childish concoctions. These were not authorized by God. They were traditions of men, which Jesus condemned on several occasions. The Gospel of Christ is simple and plain. He died for our sins. Believe on Him, and thou shalt be saved.

Verse 9.

This was in complete contrast to the worthless and empty words of the philosophers. In Christ was the fulfillment of the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. He embodied them all as the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him. No longer a symbol, but actual.

Verse 10.

As He is above and in authority over all creation, principalities and powers, believers are complete in Him. Complete means filled with Him. This, again, is in contrast to the emptiness of philosophy.

Verse 11.

They are circumcised in their hearts, set apart from the power and penalty of sin through Christ's perfect obedience to the law and sacrificial death on the cross to pay for their sins. This would include the operation of God's grace and of the Holy Spirit within the believer. This cut the power of the sins of the flesh off of the body, as opposed to the Jewish rite of cutting off of flesh.

Verse 12.

Baptism: by immersion under the water, the person is buried, as Christ was, literally, after His sacrificial death. So also to emerge from the water, the person is raised from the dead by faith with Him, as a new person, through 'the operation of God'.

Verse 13.

The uncircumcision of their flesh identifies those being addressed as non-Jews. They were under the sentence of death for their sins. Through Christ, they were forgiven of all of their sins. As Christ was quickened (brought back to life), so the sentence of death was canceled and they were accounted not guilty, unto eternal

Colossians - Lesson III continued

life.

Verse 14.

All those things that were required of man to please God, none were able to perform or fulfill. Then God Himself canceled our obligation by providing our Savior, and His death on the cross for us. Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances. This refers to the curses written in the book of Numbers 5:23 directed to be blotted out. This was accomplished by wiping the parchment with a wet sponge until the ink of the writing is no longer legible.

Verse 15.

The action described here is that of a king or general who has defeated his foes in a great battle. Those defeated are stripped of their power and authority and paraded in public to openly show this. The principalities and powers could refer to the high priests, the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin, or all of the spiritual forces that were in rebellion against God. Christ's sacrificial death provided the way of salvation and reconciliation with God that no plan of man could, and spoiled spiritual powers that wanted man to join their rebellion, to be destroyed sooner or later.

Verse 16.

Paul is referring to particular ordinances of the Jewish law and traditions things that were unclean, or certain holy days or festivals - new moons and sabbaths. These things were totally neutral to a Christian. They were part of Jewish observances, no longer of any law or force. Therefore, no one had a right to judge Christians by them (as Judaizers tried to do).

Verse 17.

Those things of the Law were shadows, types, that represented and pointed to Christ. The shadow represented things that were unsubstantial, imperfect, the body as substantial and solid. The things that Law pointed out were to be sought and obtained in Christ.

Verse 18.

As these believers had obtained the prize as granted by Christ (like a judge in an athletic contest), they must hold on to them. They must watch out for those who wish to beguile them and lead them from their reward in Christ. They are described as putting on or affecting great humility to spin fables of their sanctity being like that of an angel (speaking of things not in their experience). Of all this professed superiority in holiness and modesty, this so-called knowledge and piety, they are puffed up with great pride in all these heights of their 'fleshly mind'.

Verse 19.

This person doesn't acknowledge Christ as the Head of all believers, of His Church. Each part of His body receives guidance, direction, nourishment, light and life from Him only. This is like how the body is joined together by muscle, sinew, joints, and 'knit together' in union and harmony. It increases as God calls it to.

Colossians - Lesson III continued

Verse 20.

The rudiments of the world refers to the Jewish rites and ceremonies with earthly offerings that bring no possible salvation. Christ freed them from these things by His death, these things are accounted of no use (dead).

Verse 21.

But what do these people do? They boss people around, telling others not to touch this or taste that, or pick that thing up. As if they are saving your soul thereby. And that without them, you would have no chance of pleasing God and earning salvation.

Verse 22.

All these warnings concern things that are quickly used up, such as food and drink. Add to these the traditions of the elders which added a load of superfluous details and ceremonies which they had made up - 'doctrines of men'. Thus they thought they were adding to the benefit and holiness of the Laws of God through Moses.

Verse 23.

All these things do have 'a show of wisdom' in an only outward way. Will-worship is what a person chooses for himself, his effort to show more humility by 'neglecting of the body'. This activity and the attitude behind it are of no benefit to the body or soul, and have nothing to do with God. To not keep the body in good condition is not pleasing to God. We are to take care of what God has given us, and thereby to use it properly to His glory.

Amen.

Colossians - Lesson IV

Chapter 3. Seek those things which are above.

- 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
- 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The Old Life and the New

- 5 ¶ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
- 6 for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:
- 7 in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.
- 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.
- 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;
- 10 and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:
- 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scyth'i-an, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.
- 12 ¶ Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;
- 13 forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
- 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.
- 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.
- 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Social Duties of the New Life

- 18 ¶ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.
- 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.
- 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.
- 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.
- 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

Colossians - Lesson IV continued

23 and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Verse 1.

All those who were dead in trespasses and sins and have accepted Christ are forgiven, and born again - 'risen with Christ'. They are to focus on those things of a spiritual nature. They are above 'where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' This is part of being prepared to enjoy them.

Verse 2.

As you formerly were attached to and had strong feelings about earthly things, now as a child of God, be desiring heavenly and eternal things. Enjoy the feelings of love and forgiveness, of peace, rest, and joy in all that Christ is to us.

Verse 3.

Being born again unto eternal, spiritual life, your former earthly life is over, as if you were dead in the sense of earthly things being the only concern of those that are lost. As you have given your heart to Christ, so is your eternal life 'hid with Christ in God.' We sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3).

Verse 4.

When Christ appears again, all believers will also appear with Him in glory, the eternal state of blessedness. His life is our life.

Verse 5.

To mortify means to put to death. Here it refers to the members of the human body, to not give in to any fleshly appetites or temptations. Keep your body under control and deprive it of the strength or power to commit fleshly sins. The spirit must rule over the body, giving glory to God.

In this way, you avoid all of the following serious and destructive sins - sex outside of marriage, things dirty, unnatural, degrading, bestial lusts and so on. Evil thoughts and desires of a high and aggravated nature that take over a person's life. Covetousness means greed and centers around money. Paul calls it idolatry when it becomes the greatest value and motive in a person's life. They may be said to worship it.

His pleasure and happiness, his future, and his salvation, he considers the benefits and blessings of his wealth. All the power and glory are centered there in his mind and heart.

Verse 6.

Sin is not the purpose that God created mankind for. God's wrath and judgment ordain proper punishment on them. They are children of disobedience, obeying only their selfish lusts.

Colossians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 7.

Believers should recognize this condition, as they lived with a similar focus on earthly things before they were Christians.

Verse 8.

But now, in newness of life, they are to put off the following: anger and wrath, malice and blasphemy, or speaking evil to hurt or damage other people, filthy communication (suggesting things of a sensual or sexual nature, unnatural and forbidden). These all speak of controlling the thoughts and therefore the tongue.

Verse 9.

The truth is the standard for all communication within the Church fellowship as well as all others. This means not to exaggerate value of yourself or your property, nor denigrate the value of another or their property. Those are attitudes and deeds of the old nature, selfish and deceitful (the old man).

Verse 10.

The new nature (the new man) is in the image of God our creator, as his born again child. This came from knowledge through the Gospel.

Verse 11.

In Christ, one must not differentiate between people according to their ancestry, religious history, or place of origin. Greek, Jew, even those from the north of the Roman empire, barbarians, nor those least informed: Scythian, nor even the freeborn nor the bonded servant. There is no difference when it comes to faith unto salvation. Even the slave receives equal status in Christ. All humans are His creation. All are equally forgiven through His sacrifice. To Him all must turn to for salvation. He made, preserves, saves, and judges all men.

All men, whatever their former lives, are now the chosen of God (the elect), and called to be holy, as beloved children. They are to be merciful in action, but also in attitude and affection, the heart is the guide: tenderest feelings are for those in distress and affliction. Be ready, therefore, to be kind in a humble frame of mind, both meek, and willing to continue as long as the need does (long suffering).

Verse 13.

A constant attitude of patience toward others is called for. To bear with the immature, or less spiritual, and to be ready to forgive one another are both part of this. If you have been offended, you should be ready and willing to forgive the offender as soon as they acknowledge their fault. This is following the perfect example of Christ, Who was ready to forgive each one that turns to Him in repentance and faith.

Verse 14.

Above all, these different actions and covering them all are like an overcoat covering all other garments. This frame of mind and heart should be kept. It is charity, or unselfish love. This is the

Colossians - Lesson IV continued

bond of the mature Christian to God and man. Within this love is the feeling, power, and motive prompting every action. This brings all together in unity. In the exercise of this love, as it is expressed, given away, it is refilled to overflowing. This is what Paul describes as the 'bond of perfectness.'

Verse 15.

If one's heart is right with God, there peace in Christ rules. This peace is only possible also if there is true unity. All are members of the one body in communication, cooperation, connection, and dependance on their head, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Sustainer of the Church, His body. For this, all should be continually thankful, as bountifully blessed, both now and forever.

Verse 16.

The necessary means of sustaining one's knowledge, understanding, and faith in Christ is through His precious Word. You must bring it to continue to live within you. You should teach and be taught. Listen to preaching, teaching, admonishing, all to understanding (wisdom). God, through the Spirit, dwells in His Word. Thus the Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs, likewise, exercise the mind concerning the glory of Christ, to encourage and inspire one's self and others, giving thanks and praise to the Lord.

Verse 17.

All of these activities are guided by one's faith in our Lord Jesus. This guides our words and deeds. Acknowledge Him as your Savior and guide, pray for His support and help in all you do, giving all credit and glory to God. We are to do all praise and prayer in the Holy and precious Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, unto our Heavenly Father.

Verses 18,19.

These directions are exactly those in Ephesians 5:22,23. The guide is God's ordering of the marriage relationship. Wives submit to their husbands, their caregiver and protector. The husbands are to treat their wives from a heart and attitude of love, guarding against any other feelings, such as bitterness or resentment.

Verse 20.

Children should obey their parents in all things as well-pleasing to the Lord.

Verse 21.

Fathers avoid severe cruel punishment which will only inspire anger and rebellion, and could turn your children against you, and discourage them from ever trying to please you.

Verse 22.

Servants, obey your bosses, not just when someone is watching (eye-service men-pleasers). Work as those who serve God, doing what shows respect to God and gives Him glory.

Colossians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 23.

The same idea extended to all activities: from the heart to please the Lord, not other people.

Verse 24.

Your service to the Lord, even as servants to other men, your inheritance is not on earth in land or property, but in Christ in heaven, and it is eternal.

Verse 25.

The servant who does wrong, who secretly slacks off, steals, or does some other mischief undetected, will receive just punishment. God sees all, and will call to account. God sees the heart, with consideration of no outward merit, stature, position, power, or worldly accomplishments. The heart is turned to God in Christ, or on itself unto greed, lust, and wickedness.

Finis

Colossians - Lesson V

Chapter 4. Pray for all open doors to preach the Gospel.

1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.
 2 ¶ Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;
 3 withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
 5 ¶ Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.
 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Final Greetings

7 ¶ All my state shall Tych'icus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord:
 8 whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;
 9 with Ones'imus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.
 10 ¶ Aristar'chus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)
 11 and Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.
 12 Ep'aphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.
 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in La-odice'a, and them in Hi-erap'olis.
 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.
 15 Salute the brethren which are in La-odice'a, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.
 16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the La-odice'ans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from La-odice'a.
 17 And say to Archip'pus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.
 18 ¶ The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Verse 1.

This continues the line of thought of the previous chapter. Masters could routinely mistreat and use those under their control, who had no recourse of seeking justice or equal treatment. As Christians, masters are required to treat them equally and justly, even as God has treated them with grace and mercy in Christ.

Verse 2.

Continue in prayer, always proper and helpful, communicating

Colossians - Lesson V continued

with the source of light, power, love and peace, joy and thanksgiving. This prepares for right conversation and action among people, family, and in society. Watch to the proper use of prayer, always in the attitude of thankfulness, as God hears the prayer of His children and seeks to bless them, abundantly according to His perfect will.

Verse 3.

Paul directly asks for their prayers for him and his companions to God to open a door for their further ministry of spreading the Gospel of Christ (the mystery of salvation unto the Gentiles). Acts 14:27 - 'The door of faith is opened to the Gentiles.' Door is a metaphor for an opportunity opening.

It is for preaching this Gospel that he is presently in bonds. The Jews were behind this malice in Jerusalem. He was now in Rome.

Verse 4.

He wanted to make it known, to speak it openly to all who would listen, which is his mission wherever he is.

Verse 5.

As you are around others (non-believing Gentiles and Jews), be aware, careful, and prudent. To redeem the time (as in Ephesians 5:16) means buying it up to use it wisely, not wasting any or letting it pass unused.

Verse 6.

To speak gracefully would include patience and kindness to correctly and beneficially communicate one's faith and blessings of being a believer in Christ. To be seasoned with salt, a preservative, also brings out the flavor of the food. So should one's conversation bring out the flavor in the Gospel, and its spiritual blessings (as wholesome and wise). In this way, one is prepared 'to answer every man' to benefit them.

Verse 7.

Tychicus, Paul's beloved brother in the Lord, knew all of the particulars of his condition and status of his case, as well as his opportunities of preaching, and of the converts, even in the household of the Emperor. Paul counts this man 'a faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord,' as well.

Verse 8.

His purpose in going to them is to comfort their hearts by being informed of the fruits of Paul's ministry in Rome, to the furtherance of the faith among Gentiles, Jews, even among the Emperor's household. The most common manuscripts use 'our' not 'your before 'estate', meaning Paul is repeating what is stated in verse 7.

Verse 9.

Onesimus, who is from their Church, will accompany Tychicus. Both are faithful and beloved to Paul, as Christian brothers. He appears to have been a recent convert of Paul. This report was not

Colossians - Lesson V continued

committed to a written record, perhaps to avoid any possibility of it being confiscated by suspicious Romans, which would cause harm to Paul.

Verse 10.

Aristarchus mentioned as fellow prisoner most likely refers to his choosing to be with Paul as if he were also a prisoner. In this sense, he was also a prisoner in the service of the Lord as Paul was. Mark is mentioned, Barnabas' sister's son, who with Aristarchus sends greetings (salutations) to them. Apparently they had been sent instructions as to how to welcome Barnabas if he should come to them. No detail is known.

Verse 11.

Another fellow laborer for the Lord is named Jesus (Joshua), called Justus in Greek. He as well as Mark and Aristarchus are formerly Jews. They are the only ones presently aiding and comforting Paul.

Verse 12.

Epaphrus (from their city), a preacher of Christ, also salutes them. He fervently labors for their blessing in prayer, that they will stand firmly in their faith, fully instructed and mature in understanding the will of God (fully persuaded), thus complete (perfect).

Verse 13.

His zeal also concerns two other cities: Laodicea and Hierapolis. Both are cities of Phrygia. Colossae was between them.

Verse 14.

Luke and Demas are next mentioned. There is no detail about Demas. Only in Philemon 24 and I Timothy 4:10 is he mentioned in Scripture. Luke is identified as beloved and a physician. He is most likely a Gentile. Only here is this fact recorded. A healer during those times would dispense medicine, diagnose and treat illness, and perform surgery. They also send greetings.

Verse 15.

Carry greetings to Laodicea to the house of Nymphas which was being used as a church. This was common in those times for a Church to begin in a house - no other proper structure would have been available. Any place could be set apart for worshiping God. For domestic churches, see Romans 16:5.

Verse 16.

This letter to Colossae was to be copied and then read to that Church in Laodicea, after it was first read in Colossae. This appears to have been a normal and regular custom at that time. The teaching would be shared for as many believers as possible to benefit. A letter from Laodicea is mentioned only here and no such letter has authoritatively come down to us as having been written by Paul.

Colossians - Lesson V continued

Verse 17.

This is addressed to Archippus, that he should be encouraged to be diligent in his ministry in the Lord. Whatever it included must be carefully fulfilled. Nothing further is mentioned concerning him.

Verse 18.

This closing was written by Paul in his own handwriting as an authentication of the whole letter as dictated to those who wrote it. He signed his name at the end. They should be encouraged even as he is bonds for the cause of the Gospel. This was evidence of the importance of the spreading of the true doctrine concerning the Savior. They are to take courage therein. He wishes grace, the favor and blessing of their Lord to be upon them. By grace are they a Church, and so they will continue by the same grace, even as Paul began this letter to them. Amen.

A subscription added in most manuscripts -

Written from Rome to the Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.

End

I Thessalonians - Lesson I

Introduction.

Thessalonica was a port city on the Thermaic Gulf, in Macedonia, the ancient capital. It was added to by Philip, king of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great). Some early writers say it was named after Philip's daughter Thessalonica. It was a large and prosperous merchant city that had an extensive trade in silk. Christianity has existed there since being planted there by Paul in 51 or 52 A.D. (Acts 17 etc.). Silas was Paul's companion there.

The Jews raised accusations against Paul and companions as rebels against the Roman emperor. They escaped to Berea and continued spreading the Gospel. The same Jews pursued them there. Paul and his companions then escaped to Athens (Acts 17:15), continuing to preach, and then moved on to Corinth next. Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica to confirm and establish the believers.

When he came again and reported to Paul of their steadfastness in their newfound faith in Christ, Paul wrote this letter. Not long after, he wrote the second letter to comfort and encourage them. The second letter also included more detailed instruction on doctrine, to correct some mistaken views that had crept in among them. The majority of the believers had been devout Greeks (Jewish proselytes) and former heathens also. There were some Jews who also believed.

The majority of Biblical scholars agree that this was the first epistle that Paul wrote to any of the Churches of Christ. It was written in the year 52 A.D.

Chapter 1. Thanks to God for their good condition and faith and prayer for their steadfastness.

Salutation

1 Paul, and Silva'nus, and Timothy,
 ¶ Unto the church of the Thessalo'ni-ans which is in God the Father,
 and in the Lord Jesus Christ:
 ¶ Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord
 Jesus Christ.

The Thessalonians' Faith and Example

2 ¶ We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of
 you in our prayers;
 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of
 love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of
 God and our Father;
 4 knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.
 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in
 power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what
 manner of men we were among you for your sake.
 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received
 the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:
 7 so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and
 Achai'a.
 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in
 Macedonia and Achai'a, but also in every place your faith to God-ward
 is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

I Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

9 For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Verse 1.

Paul dictates this letter, and mentions his two companions that were with him that also had been with him in their city - Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:4,14). Silvanus was another name for Silas, Paul's companion throughout his journeys in Asia Minor and Greece (Acts 15:22; 16:19; 17:4,10). It is thought that while at Athens, Paul sent them to Thessalonica, and they rejoined him when he had gone on to Corinth, where he later wrote this letter.

The usual greeting of grace and peace from the Father and their Lord Jesus Christ is called upon to the Church there.

Verse 2.

The familiar expression of thanking God for them and praying for their continued blessing (as in Philemon 1:3,4; Colossians 1:3).

Verse 3.

Their faith was at work and put to expressing love toward others to the glory of God. They also had hope that was certain, that allowed life to be lived with patience, to endure all trials and hardships in thankfulness of the promise of the heavenly inheritance in their Lord Jesus Christ, and to God's glory, as their Heavenly Father.

Verse 4.

These believers had experienced the election of God. They were called and chosen as His children. This was proof that the Gentiles had been included as equal to Jews in the Gospel. Paul calls them brothers and beloved, equal in standing and value as members of Christ's Church.

Verse 5.

The glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ came not only by preaching and teaching, words alone, but also in the power of the Holy Spirit. This was the means of regeneration and the new birth unto life eternal as children of God. This was the seat of assurance of the truth and reality of their salvation. This is the measure of what Paul and his companions were there for, among them. It was only for their benefit and no other motive of any self-seeking kind.

Verse 6.

They had become followers of Paul and his companions, in the Lord. The power of the Holy Spirit came with their preaching and teaching among them. There had also been accusations and persecution against them during their stay there (Acts 17:5,6). The power of the Holy Spirit brought them all joy in spite of adversaries and adversity.

I Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

Verse 7.

All the other churches of Macedonia and Greece (Achaia) followed their example in belief and action.

Verse 8.

As a very active trading city, their merchants traveled throughout the general area all over Greece and any other trading destinations. With their travels they faithfully spread the Gospel - their newfound faith in God in Christ and His redemption. Their words and actions were above reproach and apparently were generally very well received without dispute. Paul had no questions or criticism about their spreading the Word of God, as true exercising of their faith.

Verse 9.

Indeed, this was living and active proof of what Paul and company had preached to them about 'the living and true God'. This was the complete opposite of their former worship of idols, both dumb and impotent. This describes the heathen Greeks. This was the height of pretense - giving value to what was false, empty, without merit, or benefit in any aspect. Now they possess the truth, the living God.

Verse 10.

Their future is now assured in Christ. They look to the future state of glory, the resurrection of the body (as seen in Christ), Who ascended unto heaven, to intercede with God for them. This also meant forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from 'the wrath to come.'

This was the message delivered abroad by these Thessalonian Christians. The news had spread even as they had. The change was dramatic. They had received the fruit of the Spirit, which was seen in their daily walk, no matter where they were. They were completely upright, and very happy about it, giving credit (glory) to God for what He had provided them in Christ, both in the present and in the future glory and blessing in His presence in Heaven. They sowed the seeds of the Word, by which God brought much increase.

Next - as a result of the persecution in Philippi, they had come here, with their manner of preaching, doctrine, and way of life.

I Thessalonians - Lesson II

Chapter 2. Why and how Paul came to Thessalonica.

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 but even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Phil'ippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4 but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:

6 nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

9 ¶ For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

12 that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 ¶ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

15 who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Paul's Absence and Concern

17 ¶ But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

I Thessalonians - Lesson II continued

Verse 1.

Addressing them as brethren, Paul reminds them that he and his companions had come to them with purpose, which had been accomplished. Many had accepted Christ under his ministry. This was the reason for his boldness in writing to bolster and encourage them in their faith.

Verse 2.

This took place after the 'shameful treatment' they (Paul and companions) suffered at Philippi: both whipped and put in prison in stocks (Acts 16:23). There was danger and they were in peril of losing their lives. When they arrived in Thessalonica, they were nevertheless bold in spite of all opposition or threat of persecution. It was most important that the Gospel be spread at every opportunity. This he had done for them.

Verse 3.

All of his words to them were meant to turn them from darkness and towards the light of God's truth: God's love, mercy, and forgiveness in Christ. All was for their present and eternal benefit, never half-truths, or intriguing, clever, beguiling or worldly deceits. He never sought to entice them for his own benefit.

Verse 4.

His message was from God. He was entrusted to faithfully carry the 'Good News' of God's provision for man's salvation in Christ. This was done for and before God, as God could truly read his heart and clearly see his motive as pure. At no time was he trying to please men, or entice them.

Verse 5.

No flattering words were used, nor was his preaching a cloak of covetousness, to hide an intent to get something from them for himself. God is his witness. Paul had the best intentions for them and gave God the glory.

Verse 6.

They also did not preach for praise or fame to be popular among many (them or others). They could have expected or asked for material help as they spread the Gospel (which Paul describes as being burdensome), but which the apostles had the right to expect. Paul went out of his way to benefit others, but neither asked nor required anything in return.

Verse 7.

Our attitude and actions when among them was not overbearing and bossy, but 'gentle', as one who seeks to nurture and lead in the best, beneficial way - just as a nurse cherishes children.

Verse 8.

Paul and companions had deep compassion and unselfish love toward them. They not only delivered the Gospel of Grace to them, but also their deepest affection, their hearts and their time in close

I Thessalonians - Lesson II continued

fellowship with them.

Verse 9.

Paul calls upon them to remember that while ministering to them, he also worked at his trade to earn his own necessities so as not to need any help from them for anything material. It must be assumed that they worked at their trade during the day so that they could preach and minister to the brethren in the evenings concerning the Gospel. This was their sole motivation and activity, all for the benefit of others, and not their own (Paul and companions).

Verse 10.

They and God are witnesses of their behavior and demeanor as just - doing nothing amiss, without any possible blame when among them. Paul writes from the pure motives and actions of his heart.

Verse 11.

The general work among them was to exhort - encouraging holy behavior, comforted in difficult circumstances, and instructed in the walk of faith, love, and obedience. This was including every single individual among them. No one was overlooked, all of equal value, even as a father treats each of his children. This was each member of the Church included, equally.

Verse 12.

All of this to walk worthy as God's children in this sinful world, showing forth faith, love, and goodness to their heavenly Father's glory in Christ. As also the Church is God's kingdom on earth until it is called home to heaven by Christ in the rapture.

Verse 13.

Paul is continually thankful in prayer to God because they had heard him preach the Word of God, and had received it as the truth from God. The Holy Spirit effectually worked in those that believed. They were born-again of the Spirit unto newness of life. This proved the message was not the word of men, but of God.

Verse 14.

The first Churches came together in Judea, started by the apostles as followers of Christ Jesus. These brethren in Asia Minor came after and are following their example. Part of that is the persecution by their countrymen (the Jews) in Judea, so now, these newer believers have been persecuted by those of their own countrymen. 'Lewd fellows' had been hired to start an uproar, calling Christians troublemakers and rebels. (See Acts chapter 17 for more details on this.)

Verse 15.

The worst example of this was the killing of the Lord Jesus. So also as they had killed their own prophets throughout their history. They had persecuted Paul and those with him, seeking his death. They claimed zeal for God's honor and glory but were hypocrites of the worst kind. What they did brought harm to all men, working against

I Thessalonians - Lesson II continued

their benefit (contrary).

Verse 16.

Their malice made them forbid Paul from spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles, 'that they might be saved'. They follow the most evil and wicked purpose to wreak havoc among Jewish believers, and any who would dare to speak of Christ to any heathen Gentile. This was accounted as continual evil, filling up their sin. The just punishment was not only certain, but would be the most severe wrath, which 'is come upon them to the uttermost.'

Verse 17.

Because of the uproar caused by the Jews in their city, Paul had to leave 'for a short time' (Acts chapter 17). This has caused him heartache. He describes this 'being taken from you', using a word that expresses the feeling of a loving father being 'torn from his children.' This made him 'more abundantly' desire to visit them as soon as it was possible.

Verse 18.

He had intended to visit them again more than once, but things got in the way. Anything that gets in the way, he credits it to 'Satan hindered us'. An adversary in the form of continued uproar against him in that city. Things had to quiet down before it would be deemed safe for him (even I Paul) to return. Paul wanted to make sure that they knew it was he that was recognized as the person expressing these things.

Verse 19.

The motive and purpose, his greatest hope, joy or crown of rejoicing, was in them, that he had led them to the Lord. Nothing in the world came anywhere near to this. This was the greatest joy possible in this life for Paul, as he imagined himself with them 'in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.' And then they would all be together for eternity. This was the whole purpose for his life.

Verse 20.

Their conversion and strength of faith and steadfastness was testimony of God's purpose and blessing of his ministry. The resulting joy was beyond anything this world could even pretend to offer.

A note - even when Satan hinders, it is God's plan and timing that rules. When the time is right, then no hindering will be allowed and God's perfect purpose will take place for the best outcome.

I Thessalonians - Lesson III

Chapter 3. Paul sends Timothy to comfort them.

1 Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;
 2 and sent Timothy, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:
 3 that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.
 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.
 5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain.
 6 ¶ But now when Timothy came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:
 7 therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:
 8 for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.
 9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;
 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?
 11 ¶ Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.
 12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:
 13 to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Verse 1.

Since he could not come to them, Paul was anxious to check on how they were doing. He decided that he would stay where he was alone (in Athens), and must send someone to check on their welfare.

Verse 2.

Timothy is chosen (who he calls his own son in the Lord in I Timothy 1:2). He is recommended as brother in Christ and a minister, a fellow laborer in the Gospel. He has, by this time, been working with Paul for several years. He was well-prepared and able to confirm their understanding of the truth of the doctrines of the Gospel - to establish and make firm their foundation upon Christ. This would bring comfort and assurance in the Lord.

Verse 3.

The fact of persecution and afflictions were to be expected in the world, and by the world. This should not move them or unsettle them. These are to be expected.

I Thessalonians - Lesson III continued

Verse 4.

Paul had warned them that wicked men would try to cause him trouble (tribulation) and try to shut him up and even seek his being locked up or even kill him. That it came to pass, they did know.

Verse 5.

Though he had to leave them, after only a short time he was concerned about knowing how they were doing in their faith. He was worried that some other influence (from the tempter) had crept in and distracted them from the Gospel. He so greatly desired that they had remained steadfast, in spite of opposition and persecution. Otherwise his ministry would have been 'in vain'.

Verse 6.

By the time of this letter, Timothy had already returned to Paul with an excellent report of their faith and charity. They stood steadfast in their belief in the truth of the Gospel. They show loving concern for each other, in harmonious unity. They also had warm affection for Paul for their memory of his ministry among them. They also greatly wished to see him again, even as he wished to see them.

Verse 7.

Even in his distress and affliction, this good report greatly comforted him. They stood strong in their faith.

Verse 8.

He has experienced renewed courage and energy by their steadfastness. His labor in the Lord has borne much fruit. It confirms his whole life's purpose in Christ, especially now with them as his spiritual children.

Verse 9.

Words can hardly convey the experience of joy he has for them. Immeasurable also is his feeling of thanksgiving to God for them. They were all on the way to heaven, together, for eternity.

Verse 10.

The only thing that would exceed the preceding joy would be to see them again face to face. For that, he and his companions have fervent prayer 'night and day'. He wishes to continue instructing them in every detail of the great outlines of God's plan and provision for them in Christ. In this way, they may be fitted and prepared unto every good work, bearing much fruit unto the Lord and to His glory.

Verse 11.

As voicing aloud a prayer, Paul writes: 'Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.' The how and when were in God's hands. Paul prayed for and awaited God's timing.

I Thessalonians - Lesson III continued

Verse 12.

He prays for their ever increasing and expressing their brotherly love, as well as reaching out to others with God's love in Christ. It is the Lord working in them both to will and to do this, even as Paul has expressed his love toward them.

Verse 13.

The greatest proof of genuine faith in Christ is seen in the exercise of this unselfish love toward God and others. This is established in their hearts 'in holiness before God our Father'. The end of this is the coming of Christ with all His saints. As time passes, His coming is closer. Paul is also praying for their good account before God at the end.

I Thessalonians - Lesson III continued

Chapter 4. Further details on Christian living.

A Life Pleasing to God

1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;

5 not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

9 ¶ But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

12 that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

The Coming of the Lord

13 ¶ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

I Thessalonians - Lesson III continued

Verse 1.

Paul uses the most fervent entreaties in the Lord's Name that they use all effort to live up to those things they had been taught by him. Their daily walk should be ever more pleasing to God. There is no limit or bounds to the Spirit and the grace of God, and also none to the exercise of those graces. Can man love God too much, or his fellow man for the cause of Christ!

Verse 2.

He reminds them of the commandments of the Lord that he had given them. John 13:34 comes to mind.

Verse 3.

They are set apart, to seek the will of God, which calls them to holiness. This requires abstaining from particular sinful activities, first listed is fornication. This includes all sorts of sexual uncleanness. This vice was very common among the Greeks and heathens generally.

Verse 4.

The vessel is assumed to mean the wife and only within marriage was sex to be practiced. This was proper, honorable, and blessed by God. The wife was the weaker vessel. (See I Peter 3:7.)

Verse 5.

The subject is general sexual excesses among the Godless Gentiles.

Verse 6.

Next subject - no one should do anything to cheat or defraud another in any matter. The Lord Who sees what is done in secret will witness any such evil behavior and will hold them accountable. Paul has forewarned and testified to this.

Verse 7.

God's call is according to His righteousness, and as we are His children, we must honor Him, in cleanliness unto holiness. This is especially for all manner of sexual perversions, all destructive to a true marriage relationship.

Verse 8.

Whoever despises this is, in effect, going directly against God, not man. The Holy Spirit is given by God to empower and guide man to righteous behavior.

Verse 9.

From all reports, they have learned to love each other as Christian brothers. This they have gotten directly from God, through the indwelling Spirit. He doesn't need to further instruct them.

Verse 10.

They have also shared this brotherly love among all believers in the area around them - Macedonia. Paul's only advice is to do so

I Thessalonians - Lesson III continued

'more and more'.

Verse 11.

They are to guard against idle talk concerning other people's business, spreading rumors, and so on. To do this and also to be idle, not providing for your needs by honest work, was wrong and must be stopped, and avoided by all. They must be quiet, mind their own business, which should be honest labor. This is the proper walk of all Christians. Paul taught this rule, and certainly was an example of this way of life.

Verse 12.

This lifestyle will be a witness to non-believers of their moral standards of honesty and earning their own way, not dependent on anyone for their needs. No one can then accuse them of any wrong or dishonesty or depending on or using others. It suggests that this type of moral behavior would be noticed as somewhat uncommon among their peers of that place and time.

Verse 13.

Paul does not wish that they be ignorant, his brethren, about these that have passed away and are 'asleep in Christ'. They continued to mourn as heathens generally do, as having no hope, no belief in the resurrection. This ignorance is something that Paul considers essential to eradicate.

Verse 14.

The greatest evidence as was widely testified to was the death and resurrection of Jesus. As the first fruit of them that slept (see I Corinthians 15:20), so also God will bring with Him those that sleep in Jesus. All believers accept these truths: as Jesus was raised, so all believers in him will be raised.

Verse 15.

Paul had received a special revelation from the Lord on this subject. Those which are alive unto the Rapture (not during Paul's time) at whatever time (which no one will know), those alive will not go before those that are dead in Christ. They shall rise first, transformed into a glorious body.

Verse 16.

This will take place at the Lord's descent from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God: the dead in Christ will rise first. In the air of the earth's atmosphere, the call will go out. Christ calls first, then the archangel, then the trumpet. All will hear the call and rise by the power of God unto the presence of Christ.

Verse 17.

Then those still alive on the earth will 'be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.'

I Thessalonians - Lesson III continued

Verse 18.

These words should bring great comfort about those that have preceded them in death. They will in no way be left behind. They will receive their glorified bodies before those still living. All will be together with Christ in heavenly places and will be even as He is, glorified and eternal.

I Thessalonians - Lesson IV

Chapter 5. Watch and pray. A time of uncertainty. Putting on the Armor of God.

- 1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.
- 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
- 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.
- 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.
- 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.
- 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.
- 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.
- 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.
- 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 10 who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
- 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Paul Exhorts the Brethren

- 12 ¶ And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
- 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.
- 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.
- 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.
- 16 Rejoice evermore.
- 17 Pray without ceasing.
- 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
- 19 Quench not the Spirit.
- 20 Despise not prophesyings.
- 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
- 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.
- 23 ¶ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Final Greetings and Benediction

- 25 ¶ Brethren, pray for us.
- 26 ¶ Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

I Thessalonians - Lesson IV continued

27 ¶ I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

28 ¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Verses 1,2.

Paul reminds them that no one knows, or can or will know, the time of Christ's return in the Rapture. This they were previously taught as what Jesus answered His disciples in Matthew 24:45; 25:13: 'The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.' It has been suggested that included is the speculation of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, as immediately preceding Christ's second coming.

Verse 3.

The call of peace and safety was the Jews' claim shortly before the Romans came against them. They felt secure unto the sudden destruction, the Temple burned to the ground, hundreds of thousands massacred, the remaining sold as slaves and dispersed in all directions. As birth pangs came upon a pregnant woman, they can be very sudden, then drawn out, or quickly increased. So the time of actual birth cannot be known: the week, the day, the hour. Birth, as destruction, was certain and would come suddenly - without escape.

Verse 4.

A comment on Psalms 9:8. A revered old Jewish maxim stated that God would judge the Israelites in the day, and the Gentiles in the night. Here he calls the brethren as not in darkness, as their light should be able to warn them.

Verse 5.

As children of light, and of the day, they are not of the opposite - night and darkness. They live in the light of Christ's Good News of the Gospel.

Verse 6.

Others live as though asleep, careless and as if nothing really matters, without future or purpose. We must stay alert, be sober, with purpose and a plan, a destiny, an eternal destination.

Verse 7.

Those that sleep and are drunken do so at night, the darkness hiding their excesses and sins, seeking no enlightenment or education. They prefer to maintain their ignorance, and therefore have no reason to change. The darkness was preferred, within and without.

Verse 8.

We must be the opposite. People of the light, of the day, be sober. We are called to watch, to defend ourselves from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Armor is our defense, in the Spirit. A breastplate of faith and love protects the heart. The helmet, the hope of salvation, protects the head (the mind). More detail is found in Ephesians chapter 6.

I Thessalonians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 9.

Those who obtained salvation through Christ are not appointed by God to wrath. Thus those who rejected Christ, the Lord, were. The Jewish nation was soon to be destroyed because of this in 70 A.D., only a few years after this letter was written. The Gentiles were offered the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 10.

He died for us, and we live in Him, while still on earth, or if we die (sleep) we will also be with Him. Paul may also be referring to the time of the Rapture when all believers will be called home to be with Christ forever.

Verse 11.

In all these things they are to remind, comfort, and encourage each other. This will carry them through trials, temptation, or doubt. This they have done and should continue to do.

Verse 12.

Paul strongly desires that the brethren recognize those ministering among them, that they are trying, sincerely, to guide, teach, and encourage them to maturity in their faith and practice 'in the Lord'.

Verse 13.

And show them proper respect with the added sense of their motives being unselfish love, to return that love as unto Christ for their works as in Christ's service. This should include providing for their basic needs if necessary for their welfare. All should be in agreement, and at peace with each other.

Verse 14.

General rules, using military phrases. He calls upon those in authority, to admonish the unruly. Those who are 'out of their ranks', not acting properly or prepared to do what is prescribed, but meddle with impropriety. Then, toward the faint-hearted, the feeble, comfort and encourage them in the Lord, that He will be with them and bring them through. The weak are to be supported, prop them up, strengthen their faith and resolve by the words of Christ. Patience will be required in each of the preceding responsibilities. God is still in charge. His will shall come to pass. He is with you. To manage and direct a Church requires skill, discipline, and prudence, as officers over their troops in daily dealings with the opposing world of temptation, opposition, greed, and sin.

Verse 15.

The old nature requires evil to be returned for evil received. In Christ, the opposite must be done - return good 'for evil unto any man', not just another Christian. Only that which is good, among the brethren, but also to all man. Thus is God glorified, showing unselfish love returned to God for His first loving us in His Son.

I Thessalonians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 16.

This is the great, continual cause for rejoicing - both now and forever. For He is with us, He has prepared a place for us, to be with Him and the Father forever. Joy and praise evermore.

Verse 17.

Pray at all times, knowing your dependance and reliance on God, seeking guidance and empowering to perceive and be ready to speak and act according to His will, His good pleasure, Communion and communication keep us in proper balance and positive attitude in all situations.

Verse 18.

All those in Christ should continually give thanks unto God. To be in Christ is God's greatest gift, worthy of praise, honor, and eternal gratitude. We are in His will, and our duty is to be grateful, giving thanks in everything.

Verse 19.

The Spirit of love is like a burning fire within, and nothing should be done which lessens (or quenches) its brightness, whether thought or deed. This would include all contrary attitudes or negative or hurtful feelings and so forth.

Verse 20.

Every one can use continual instruction. Your attitude should never be despising or rejecting it. 'Propheying' includes all preaching of God's Word.

Verse 21.

Whatever is taught or preached should be compared to Scripture, and/or Paul's epistles to prove their legitimacy. Hold on with a firm grasp those things that are good and correct, the confirmed truth.

Verse 22.

Do nothing that could even give an appearance of evil. Do not go near the border between good and evil: neither in form, sound, or substance. This is a direct choice: to stay away.

Verse 23.

God, the author and giver of peace continues the work of setting them apart unto becoming completely holy. To cleanse them from all unrighteousness, and this to the end of their lives on earth, by this grace. Their spirit, soul, and body will be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus. This is Paul's continual prayer for all believers, those he wrote to and all those that followed them. This includes all aspects of the whole person, all parts to be transformed unto the eternal form at Christ's call at the Rapture.

Verse 24.

In many Scriptures, God has promises that He will sanctify His followers. What He has promised, He will also bring to pass. He is faithful. Who He has called, He will fulfill His purpose in them.

I Thessalonians - Lesson IV continued

Verse 25.

A responsibility and blessing to others, especially those who minister, is prayer for them. Paul calls upon his brethren to pray for him and his fellow laborers in the Lord, as is proper.

Verse 26.

The common greeting among Christians was a holy kiss, a sign of Godly love and unity of fellowship, a closeness as a family.

Verse 27.

In the Lord's Name, Paul insists that this message be read to all the 'holy brethren'. This may include all the brethren in nearby groups of believers as well as those in this city it is addressed to. It was also expected that the epistles and other accepted writings be copied so each Church would have them to edify and maintain their faith, knowledge, and understanding concerning the whole Gospel, doctrine, blessings, instruction, and practice.

Verse 28.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the opening and closing of all that is done and said in His service.

Amen.

The subscription was written later. Slightly different in various manuscripts. This one is most commonly accepted.

A side note. He also prays for every part of people, the material body, the soul where emotion and passion are active, and the spirit, the life source, the seat of intelligence, understanding, thought, reason, the faculty of speech.

II Thessalonians - Lesson I

Introduction.

It appears that this letter was written fairly soon after the first (in 52 or 53 A.D.) as a result of Paul's receiving a report that his first epistle had led to a group of that church thinking that Christ was about to return very shortly. As a result, they had stopped their normal activities and only waited and watched for His return. It was partly as a result of Paul's detailed description of the events of the Rapture in his first letter to them. This epistle directly confronts and puts in perspective the unknowable timing of that event, and the present responsibilities of the believers.

Chapter 1. Paul begins with compliments for their faith and unity.

Salutation

1 Paul, and Silva'nus, and Timothy,
 ¶ Unto the church of the Thessalo'ni-ans in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
 2 ¶ Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Judgment at Christ's Coming

3 ¶ We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;
 4 so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:
 5 which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:
 6 seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
 7 and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 9 who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;
 10 when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.
 11 ¶ Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:
 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

Verse 1.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus to the Church of the Thessalonians as in the first epistle. Silas (Silvanus), and Timotheus (Timothy) were still with Paul in Corinth. All believers together in the Fatherhood of God by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 2.

The same greeting as before: wishing them grace and peace from the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 3.

Paul expresses great thankfulness always to God for what God has been empowering and inspiring these beloved brethren to do. Their faith is growing exceedingly, and greatly producing good fruit. This from the seed planted and watered by Paul and his companions. Their love also matured and was openly expressed in increasing and unselfish measure. This was above normal growth and expectations to put together the two words 'aboundeth' and 'exceedingly'. This describes the attitude and actions of the entire congregation towards each other. This was the unifying bond of 'charity' or unselfish love in Christ, among His brethren, children of God.

Verse 4.

This is the more remarkable when also considering their persecutions and tribulations. Paul praised God for their patience and faith, letting their example be known in the other Churches. The trials rather thoroughly convinced them of the absolute truth of the Gospel: the very power of God unto salvation in Christ. They held fast.

Verse 5.

In deed their steadfastness showed forth the proof of God's righteous judgment in calling these Gentiles into His Church, as His newborn children by the Holy Spirit. Their endurance is proof of their worthiness to inherit the kingdom of God.

Verse 6.

Paul reminds them that God will certainly give tribulation back to those who have been persecuting them. Paul calls it 'a righteous thing with God'. They will be paid for their labor with a measure equal to what they dished out.

Verse 7.

Those believers who are suffering when the persecutors are suffering will have eternal rest. This will take place when the Lord Jesus calls from Heaven, with His mighty angels. The presence of angels is mentioned in Deuteronomy 33:2; Matthew 25:31; 26:64; Mark 8:38.

Verse 8.

When He returns to Earth, there will be flaming fire, thunder and lightning, to take vengeance on those who were against God, rejected the Gospel of Christ, and reviled and persecuted believers.

II Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

Verse 9.

Their just punishment will be everlasting in outer darkness, far away from God and His light and love.

Verse 10.

Christ's glory will be shown to its greatest extent in the presence of His saints, which will include those that believed the testimony of Paul and his fellow laborers. All shall show grateful admiration for what Christ gave up, and what He gave, but then so much more to see Him as glorified as He had been with the Father before the foundation of the world. All believers will be like Him, and see Him as He is (I John 3:2).

Verse 11.

Paul's prayer is always for God to continue the work begun in them, to make them 'worthy of this calling'. This is God's will and good pleasure to save them. By faith and His power, He will fulfill to the uttermost what He has begun in them that believe.

Verse 12.

The great completion and consummation of their calling in Christ. His passion and sacrifice shown forth in their blessed lives of peace, joy, and thankfulness, and living to the glory of God. His Spirit and attendant gifts show forth 'ye in Him'. He is glorified by their salvation from all sin. All of this shows the great grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

Chapter 2. Stand fast, beware of rumors.

The Revealing of the Man of Sin

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Chosen to Salvation

13 ¶ But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 ¶ Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

II Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

Verse 1.

These brethren had been misled by false or mixed up teachers that thought his first letter spoke of the day of judgment as being imminent. This second letter was quickly composed and sent to assure them that certain things had to happen first, making Christ's return distant.

Verse 2.

All those central doctrines of the Gospel must be held onto - they must not be 'shaken' or 'troubled' by any pretended revelation or contrary claim that Christ's coming was at hand. Even if it is claimed that a letter from him said so, or the misinterpretation of his first letter. The day of Christ is not at hand.

Verse 3.

That day must be preceded by a 'falling away', a total abandonment or serious corruption of Christianity. The man of sin will then be revealed, the son of perdition or destruction.

Verse 4.

This one will oppose God and exalt himself as above all Divine authority, above all entities that are worshiped. He will place himself in the Temple of God and demand worship as he claims himself as God, the Most High.

Verse 5.

This subject he had previously talked about at their church. He calls upon them to call these things to mind. He is reluctant to go into further detail in this letter.

Verse 6.

He had also told them what prevented this man of sin from revealing himself.

Verse 7.

The system of corrupt doctrine that will lead to general apostasy was already in existence, but not in the open. It was hidden, a mystery. There is the power of the Holy Spirit that hinders, until He is taken out of the way (at the Rapture of the Church). Then that wicked one will be revealed.

Verse 8.

That wicked one shall the Lord consume with the Spirit of His mouth, the Word of God, the light and heat of the truth. Its brightness will blast this person of darkness and lies unto destruction.

Verse 9.

This man of sin who came in the power of satan, using signs and wonders, all false, appearances without reality or substance.

Verse 10.

God allows them to continue in their desires - even strong

II Thessalonians - Lesson I continued

delusions, as they are ready to believe the greatest lie, the rejection of truth in Christ.

Verse 12.

Their just reward will be damnation, choosing to continue in the darkness rather than see and accept the light of truth. This was their choice, where they saw pleasurable benefits of the flesh.

Verse 13.

Paul continually ('always') gives thanks to God for these beloved brethren, 'beloved of the Lord'. This calling of Gentiles, God purposed to do from the beginning. They were chosen to be saved by faith in Christ Jesus. Then the Spirit of God would sanctify their souls, producing inner holiness, and outward behavior unto the glory of God in their daily walk.

Verse 14.

Paul's preaching of the Gospel to them was God's call to them. The purpose was for them to the 'obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ', salvation from their sins, adopted as children of the Heavenly Father and sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God.

Verse 15.

All these blessings call for their faithfulness. They must 'stand fast', and hold on to the truth they had been taught. The doctrines of the Gospel had been taught and preached, 'whether by word, or our epistle.'

Verse 16.

Now Paul expresses his constant prayer for them: that 'our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us' has given faith in His 'everlasting consolation'. This gift of the Gospel by His grace is His complete promise and best provision for hope in the resurrection of the body unto everlasting life. Being future, they yet were well convinced of the Father's fulfillment of His promise being brought to pass.

Verse 17.

The confirmation and strength is this truth which should establish, comfort, and empower them to a daily walk of giving love, honor, and testimony of God's grace, forgiveness, and joy in word and deed. Every child of God glorifies his Heavenly Father by his obedience, following the example of Jesus.

Finis

II Thessalonians - Lesson II

Chapter 3. Paul asks for prayer for freedom to speak the Gospel and freedom from evil men. This is also his prayer for them.

Pray for Us

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:
 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.
 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.
 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.
 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

The Obligation to Work

6 ¶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.
 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;
 8 neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:
 9 not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.
 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.
 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.
 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.
 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.
 14 ¶ And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.
 15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Benediction

16 ¶ Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.
 17 ¶ The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.
 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Verse 1.

'Finally' means he is coming to a conclusion. Prayer is necessary, brethren, to prepare the way for the spreading of the Word of the Lord. In this way, it may be spoken without restraint, and with enlightening results, that it may run its course to the end of its effects and fruit-bearing as it had at their Church.

Verse 2.

Pray also for deliverance from 'unreasonable and wicked men',

II Thessalonians - Lesson II continued

not of the faith. They have no restraint, acting on impulse, seeking to do harm.

Verse 3.

The Lord has promised and is faithful. He has established them and will keep them from the evil, and the evil one.

Verse 4.

Paul has confidence in the Lord concerning these Christians. He has blessed them and will continue to do so. They have closely followed Paul's teaching and behave accordingly, and Paul is confident of their continuing to do so. They have obeyed the high calling as children of God, to honor their Heavenly Father, as Paul has instructed them, and commanded them.

Verse 5.

The love of God is spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, the strongest motive for the principle of obedience, as a child obeys his father. This also brings patience, through suffering and persecution, until Christ comes.

Verse 6.

Withdraw (as a command from Paul in Jesus' Name) from the disorderly, those that choose to still indulge in unseemly conversation and behavior, those who don't mind their own business. The believers should study to be quiet, work with their hands (I Thessalonians 4:11,12). They are disobedient to his previous instruction, the revelation from God in his first epistle to them.

Verse 7.

Paul and his companions had daily demonstrated this proper behavior before them, in good order. Therefore, they know exactly how to follow this example.

Verse 8.

Paul and his companions worked at their trade 'night and day' to pay for their necessities. They did not ask for or accept food from anyone. It has been suggested that this was a poor church and giving supplies to visitors would have been a hardship for them. Paul was determined to not be a burden or to cost them anything for his and his companions' needs, even while ministering among them.

Paul expresses his judgment against those who would preach or teach with a reward or goods expected in return (no matter the limited means of their audience in the Church). Paul would never be a burden to others.

Verse 9.

Paul realizes that he has the right (or power) to expect support from those to whom he ministers. I Corinthians 9:14 - 'Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' He did not claim this privilege, wanting to be an example for others to follow. This was especially for ministering among the poor who could little take on another burden on their

II Thessalonians - Lesson II continued

meager condition.

Verse 10.

This was his consistent instruction when he was with them. None should come to Church gatherings for a free meal, or becoming a burden on others. Those who would not work should also not eat. This was true from the fall of Adam. Genesis 3:19 - 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread...'

Verse 11.

Paul has had some reporting from their church that there were certain ones that were misbehaving (disorderliness), being lazy, and messing around in other people's business (busybodies). Being nosy, starting rumors, tattletales, and making fun of others. They only cause confusion and hurt feelings, never any benefit.

Verse 12.

They are to be admonished and convinced by the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ to mind their own business, with quietness. They must work for and thereby eat their own bread. It is a shame for a man who is able to work to live on the bounty or mercy of another. The Church is no place for such.

Verse 13.

There should always be readiness in well-doing. To see needs and reach out to help, to encourage, pray for, and help in any way possible is the Christian way.

Verse 14.

If any in their fellowship still refuse to behave in the manner prescribed by his first letter and now again in this one, that person is to be set apart, excluded from fellowship. This serves them notice of their obstinacy and to make them take careful notice of their errors (refusal to comply), so hopefully to awaken their conscience to pursue change in the right way.

Verse 15.

Admonish this person as a brother (a fellow believer), not an enemy (an unbeliever). This is done to make him aware of his actions that dishonor his calling as a Christian and a child of God. This would, hopefully, bring him to repentance, and return to fellowship and unity with the Church community.

Verse 16.

The Lord of peace give you peace always. In Ephesians 2:14, He is called our peace. In Isaiah 9:6, He is called the Prince of Peace. In Him, peace beyond all the world can offer, much less provide and guarantee. And this call for the Lord to be with them all, individually, and as a congregation, no matter what the conditions or circumstances. Jesus promised to be with all believers even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).

II Thessalonians - Lesson II continued

Verse 17.

Paul wrote the closing with his signature at the end in his own handwriting, to certify that the enclosed letter was authentically his message. He did this in every epistle to prevent forgery or false messages intended to fool anyone. That this was his practice suggests that there had been some attempts to do this very thing, and so he writes in his recognizable script in closing his letters with his signature.

Verse 18.

He calls the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with them all. That His favor and blessing be with them. So be it (Amen).

Subscription.

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens. This is one of several subscriptions, describing this letter as from other cities as well. These were not of divine origin, and not reliable or essential to anything within the letters.

I Timothy - Lesson I

Introduction.

Who was Timothy?

From the Acts of the Apostles. When Paul and Barnabas were on their first journey among the Gentiles, and went to Lystra in Lyconia, they preached the Gospel for some time. They were persecuted but many were converted (Acts 14:5,6). It is surmised that one was a Jewess named Lois, and her daughter Eunice. Eunice had married a Greek Gentile, who had fathered Timothy. The father apparently was dead by this time. These three lived together. (See also Acts 16:1-3.)

Apparently, he had been raised in the fear of God in Judaism (II Timothy 1:15; 3:15). He became a convert in the Christian faith through Paul and they became very close. When Paul returned later to Lystra, Timothy was a reputable member of that Church. By their recommendation, from then and there Paul took him as companion in his further travels (Acts 16:1-3). It became necessary to have him circumcised, so that Paul and he both would be accepted to preach in Jewish gatherings in Jewish Synagogues. Otherwise Paul would have been rejected as unclean, in fellowship with a Gentile.

That Timothy had a special call of God as an evangelist is evident. The elders at Lystra as well as Paul set him apart, by the laying on of hands (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:18; 3:14), and prophetic declarations relative to him. He accompanied Paul and Silas to Phrygia to the Churches there, then on to Troas, where Luke joined them. Then the call to Macedonia. Then to Neapolis and Philippi where a Church was planted. Then on to Thessalonica where the unbelieving Jews forced them to flee to Berea, and followed them there.

To elude their rage, Paul left by night, going on to Athens. Timothy and Silas were left at Berea. Timothy came to Paul in Athens, giving an accounting of the serious afflictions of the believers in Thessalonica. Then, Paul sent Timothy back to bring them encouragement and comfort.

Paul went on to Corinth. Silas and Timothy joined him there, assisting in evangelizing the Corinthians. Then, all went to Ephesus, then Jerusalem and Antioch (in Syria). From there, Paul, along with Timothy - on his 3rd apostolic journey - visited all the Churches of Galatia and Phrygia, then on to a lengthy stay at Ephesus for the second time.

Paul mentioned Timothy's authority in the same doctrine as his in several of his epistles to the Churches. Paul's respect and affection towards him are shown in the two letters that bear his name. They direct the correct discharge of the duties of ministers of the Gospel in the proper manner.

I Timothy - Lesson I continued

The date of this letter is sometime between 62 and 66 A.D. Most likely, it was written from Macedonia. II Timothy was written from prison in Rome shortly before Paul's death.

These letters were called 'pastoral', as addressed to pastors of churches, outlining their duties. These included to teach and maintain sound doctrine. Also, how to handle problems that would arise.

Chapter 1:1-11. Salutation, false teaching, the truth, his own conversion and former state.

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

2 ¶ Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith:

¶ Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Warning against False Doctrine

3 ¶ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

6 from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7 desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

8 ¶ But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

9 knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Verse 1.

Paul, an apostle by the commandment of God. Apostle, one chosen to be sent to another. In this particular, God chose that the message

I Timothy - Lesson I continued

was salvation. The message was to mankind. In Paul's case, the audience was the Gentiles. The salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. Otherwise mankind has no hope. Expectation of being saved comes only by His Gospel. From Him all our blessings flow.

Verse 2.

Paul addresses Timothy as his son in the faith. He was brought to salvation through Christ by his ministry. 'Beloved' is in the sense of the term 'my own son'. Paul wishes grace, mercy, and peace unto him - the unmerited favor, the purifying and comforting blessings of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. All together they bring joy, assurance, contentment.

Verse 3.

Paul had, with earnest concern, asked him to remain at Ephesus while he journeyed onward into Macedonia. He depended on Timothy's prudence and sound grounding in the faith to stay behind to prevent any spreading of doctrine that would do harm to the believers' faith and understanding of God's truth in the Gospel of Christ. It has been supposed that Paul meant Judaizers, teachers, 'certain persons', at that Church must be stopped.

Verse 4.

Fables, idle fancies, and imaginary ideas with no substance or relation to Scripture, must be disregarded. Various opinions and traditions are in this category. Endless genealogies which spend great amounts of otherwise valuable time, to reach no great or beneficial conclusions, only bring up more questions which point to no possible certain answers. A waste of time! Most likely these were primarily Jewish questions. They had no value in considering the Gospel, which is in faith - no works or value in natural descent. All conversation should be to edify, to build up and confirm the things of faith in the truth of God in the Gospel of Christ. 'So do.'

Verse 5.

The latter considerations lead to the fruit of the Spirit, the cleansed heart and conscience, and true faith in God's forgiveness in Christ. This brings out unselfish love toward God and people. Such was Christ's commandment that His disciples love one another as He loves them. This kind of love cannot be sincerely pretended.

Verse 6.

It appears that some have attempted, but missed the mark, and have turned to empty or vain talking. This is like a jumble of great many words that bring no benefit or even sense. Talking to hear

I Timothy - Lesson I continued

themselves talk.

Verse 7.

Again, Jewish so-called Christians wished to be revered and esteemed as if rabbis. They wanted to be seen as 'teachers of the law'. They talked in traditions which they neither understood or could explain their meaning. Many were dubious or plainly false.

Verse 8.

Paul asserts that the Law as given by God is good and was provided to guide man for his own good, as Paul explains in Romans 7:12-16. The question is, how is it used by man? The ceremonial law was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. He is the end of that law for justification to everyone that believes. To use it otherwise is to misuse it - not according to its intended design and meaning.

Verse 9.

The law of Moses was given to restrain crime, and inflict punishment. Thus, not needed for the righteous but for the lawless and disobedient, the wicked. The ungodly, having no religion, no true worship, as well as the sinner who transgresses the laws. The unholy are unclean inside and out. The profane, from the original word, means 'far from the temple', outside of any belief. Murderers of every degree are unnatural, horrible, and deserve the death penalty.

Verse 10.

Continuing the list of the most vile. Whore-mongers that defile themselves, covers every sexual deviation. Men-stealers equals slave dealers, the buying and selling of people, the nations that legalize or carry on such traffic of human flesh - altogether evil. Liars are those who knowingly speak contrary to the truth, or to twist the truth to be mislead. Purjured persons who swear an oath and then do what is contrary to it. To make a promise and break it. Any other thing includes any other vice or immorality that is opposite to 'sound doctrine'. This, for the Christian, would go beyond the moral law of the Old Testament and include the precepts of Christianity, which calls for positive and beneficial attitudes and actions toward others.

Verse 11.

The guide is the 'glorious Gospel of the blessed God', which was committed to Paul's trust. It brings peace and good will among men and glory to God.

Finis.

I Timothy - Lesson II

I Timothy 1:12-20.

Paul's Thankfulness for Mercy

12 ¶ And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 ¶ This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 of whom is Hymene'us and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Verse 12.

Paul expresses his most sincere and deeply felt thankfulness for what Christ Jesus our Lord had enabled, chosen, empowered, and strengthened him to do in the ministry. He knew that Paul would be faithful (he counted him faithful) in the preaching and teaching of His Gospel to all who would listen.

Verse 13.

Paul reminds Timothy of his earlier history as a persecutor of Christians. He spoke against Christ and those that believed in Him, even to the extreme of injuring them, as well as having them put in prison - or to death. He was zealous, thinking he was doing a service for God, even as the majority of Jews did also. But he 'obtained mercy', because he did so in unbelief, being ignorant of the faith.

Verse 14.

The grace of our Lord was 'exceeding abundant', meaning above and beyond all measure, unto super-overabundance, extraordinarily over-flowing mercy. He was forgiven and experienced faith and love in Christ Jesus, which set him apart and on the new path to proclaim the Truth, the Way, and the Life.

I Timothy - Lesson II continued

Verse 15.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. All are condemned to eternal death, in their sins. Christ came to redeem them. By His death, His grace and Spirit, He saves them. This is eternal Truth from God. This is beyond any doubt, worth accepting by all, for all have sinned. Paul, on reflection, labels himself as chief of all sinners, as he was a former persecutor of Christians.

Verse 16.

That Paul obtained mercy after his former hostility and zealous hatred of Christians shows Christ's longsuffering and pardoning mercy. This is a pattern or example that shows that there is no sin that cannot find forgiveness in the sacrifice of Christ. This is great encouragement of the grace, mercy, and love of God in the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord, to all those that believe on Him to life everlasting. If Christ saved Saul of Tarsus, all sinners have hope.

Verse 17.

This calls for a burst of thankfulness and the sincerest gratitude to God. For, in the beginning of the spreading of the Gospel, God saved him as a pattern of all those that would come to belief in Christ. God was in charge, as living, the only eternal, immortal, invisible, and wise One. All honor and reverential respect toward the eternal source and sustainer and provider of all creation. Glory to all of His marvelous attributes and excellencies - the one and only God for ever and ever. Amen.

Verse 18.

The charge mentioned here is to keep the Judaizing teachers from getting him to stray from the doctrine which Paul had delivered to him. This is referring back to verses 3-7. There had been prophecies about Timothy's calling to be a minister and teacher of the believers. Paul calls on him to put forth all appropriate effort in acting positively on these predictions. Paul likens it to that of a soldier called to battle, to fight the adversaries and stand for the faith through all circumstances.

Verse 19.

He must hold tightly onto the Truth of the Gospel and live accordingly. This will leave him with a good conscience. However, some have been like foolish soldiers. They put away the shield of faith or breastplate of righteousness. They were like a foolish sailor which abandons the helm or disregards the compass. Both would be vulnerable to hardship or defeat, or shipwreck. Without a firm

I Timothy - Lesson II continued

grasp of the Truth, every wind would blow one off course, unto troublesome times, rocks, or sandbars.

Verse 20.

Two individuals are mentioned that fit the previous description - Hymeneus and Alexander. Paul writes that he had turned them over to satan - meaning for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. As previously mentioned in I Corinthians 5:5, an incorrigible transgressor was to be tormented with diseases and terrors, sometimes for a season, sometimes unto death. The soul (or spirit) found mercy, being immortal.

This was an example to other believers, and to bring the affected individual to humiliation and contrition. Though the flesh was destroyed, the spirit was saved. This was apparently an apostolic power and none after them was entrusted with it.

I Timothy 2:1-5. Further instruction in prayer.

Instructions concerning Prayer

- 1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;
- 2 for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
- 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
- 4 who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
- 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Verse 1.

Paul exhorts them to be continually in prayer and praise to God. Prayer for strength in the face of persecution and daily needs, both for ourselves and for fellow believers. All must be in the spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving unto God in all blessings. Prayer must include all people, for their conversion.

Verse 2.

This should include those in authority over us in the world (kings, governments, etc.). The purpose was for a society of peace and safety where Christians could live peaceful and quiet lives, both honestly and in all godliness. Good rulers have power to do much to benefit the people. Any positive influence of prayer is helpful.

I Timothy - Lesson II continued

Verse 3.

The praying is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior for the previously mentioned reasons.

Verse 4.

Under the peaceful conditions of a safe society, the Gospel may be freely preached to all people. Thus the gift of salvation is offered, the Truth of God's provision in the Gospel of His Son. All are called to faith. This is God's will, but few will answer that call. Few are chosen, converted by the Word and the Holy Spirit unto the new birth as children of God for now and eternally.

Verse 5.

One God, one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. He Who reconciles two parties at enmity. Man was God's enemy because of sin. Jesus, as both man and God, stood between and represented man to God and God to man by His perfect obedience of God's law, and sacrificial death, paying the redemption price for man. Thus, reconciliation was accomplished, once and for all.

Finis

I Timothy - Lesson III

I Timothy 2:6-15. Continuing about Jesus.

- 6 who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.
8 ¶ I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.
9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;
10 but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.
11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.
12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.
13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.
15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Verse 6.

Jesus paid for the redemption of a captive. He paid with His life in exchange for the life of another. His death is of value beyond all others. It paid the price for all. God's timing determined when this was to take place. It was then testified to, also at the proper time. This was begun by the apostles and then continued to be spread more widely and rapidly in this age of grace, the times of the Gentiles.

Verse 7.

Paul was set apart, appointed (ordained) a preacher, and an apostle. He speaks the truth in Christ, called to this work by Christ, to testify to His truth, speaking only what he has received - nothing on his own (he therefore does not lie). He speaks specifically to the Gentiles as especially commissioned, nothing but the truth, faithfully and truly, with passion and perseverance and in Spirit.

Verse 8.

He calls upon believers to pray for the promised blessings of God as their Heavenly Father. Everywhere is appropriate for prayer. This was very different from the traditions practiced by the Jews, where only specific places were proper for prayer (Temple, synagogue, and special 'oratories' built for prayer). The custom of lifting up

I Timothy - Lesson III continued

hands and arms was common among Jews and heathens. It was an action of entreaty and supplication. The lifting up signifies the offering of a sacrifice - the Lamb of God.

Faith is the only way of salvation for a sinner. Their thoughts must not be clouded by anger against anyone. No doubts are allowed - one must completely rely on the promises of God and the finished work of Christ for each one who believes.

Holy hands refers to the Jewish custom of washing the hands before prayer, to signify the heart's purpose to turn from all sin, and put all effort toward living a holy and righteous life.

Verse 9.

Women receive specific instructions regarding the modest manner that should be shown. The dress was to be simple and well covering. However, it should not be adorned with gold and precious stones at the shoulders or on the girdle. Also, the hair was not to be overly complex with crimping or curling. Shame-facedness means modesty. Sobriety, to be serious, and not loose. The idea was to not demand or attract unduly attention to one's self by an outward show. Moderation is the guide.

Verse 10.

The only proper ornaments for women professing godliness are good works.

Verse 11.

In general, in a gathering or assembly of believers, women should defer to the role of men as customary preachers and teachers. They should listen in silence as subject to their authority over them. Paul mentions in I Corinthians 11:5 that every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head. This was a universal and long customary tradition among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans concerning women appearing in public. It was a law among the Jews. To do otherwise was to dishonor her husband. Women, by Roman law, were not allowed to hold public office or be in any professions which men traditionally held.

Verse 12.

Paul doesn't allow women to teach in authority over men, but to keep silent, not interrupt or ask questions. This was the state of that culture at that time.

Verse 13.

Paul goes back to the Genesis account of the creation of Adam, then Eve. Adam was thereby pre-eminent, the well-fitted, robust man

I Timothy - Lesson III continued

to live a public life. The woman was by nature not so fitted.

Verse 14.

The serpent beguiled Eve and she did eat. She led the way. In consequence she was subject to her husband - he shall rule over her. Adam was not deceived. He accepted the fruit from the hand of his wife. He knew he was transgressing God's word. She was deceived and transgressed first.

Verse 15.

The female shall be saved in childbearing. By this means will the Savior be brought forth into the world. The salvation of the human race, all of which came forth from the seed of Adam through the childbearing of Eve (all of their posterity). The Savior was uniquely the Seed of the woman as promised in Genesis 3:15.

Child-bearing in itself does not save all women, but those with faith in God and love also which are the motives for living in holiness and sobriety. This also applies to all men's salvation: faith and love toward God and His salvation through Christ, called to walk in holiness and sobriety.

I Timothy 3:1-7.

Qualifications of Bishops

1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Verse 1.

The office of a bishop, overseer, or superintendent of the Church, according to the Word of God. It is a good work if a man has an earnest desire for this office. The following verses state the necessary qualifications required.

I Timothy - Lesson III continued

Verse 2.

Bishop comes from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning to look over or inspect. Paul uses the word when speaking to the elders at Ephesus (see Acts 20:28). He also uses this to address like persons in other locations (see Titus 1:7; Philemon was also a bishop). The qualifications are as follows.

First: to be blameless - nothing can be accused of, being invulnerable because he has fulfilled his Christian duties and is sound in every doctrine of Christian faith.

Second: the husband of one wife, faithful and true.

Third: vigilant - watchful, which includes being sober, to be able to watch over the Church.

Fourth: sober - having a sound mind, dispassionate, prudent with restraint, a good understanding.

Fifth: of good behavior - correct or upstanding in the whole - appearance, conversation, and conduct, all outward, the observable daily walk.

Sixth: given to hospitality - to welcome strangers, receive them into his home and provide their needs. The local Churches over which a bishop presided would be responsible to help support his charity and hospitality.

Seventh: apt to teach. One who is well informed concerning articles of faith and the Holy Scriptures, thus prepared and ready to teach others at any opportunity. This would include preaching.

Verse 3.

Eighth: not given being a wine bibber or someone that behaves in an insolent, abusive manner, lording himself over others.

Ninth: no striker - one who would strike anyone who disagrees with him, one who is quarrelsome.

Tenth: not greedy of filthy lucre, not seeking his own benefit in getting money or trade.

Eleventh: patient, meek, gentle.

Twelfth: not a brawler, but quiet and peaceable.

Thirteenth: not covetous, not seeking office for material benefits.

Verse 4.

Fourteenth: rules well his own household, governs his own family well. Each one knowing their position and responsibilities, and the proper time for their carrying them out. Rule over the children with gravity in an integral part.

Verse 5.

Method and order are required whether household or Church of

I Timothy - Lesson III continued

God. Obviously, if the one is in disorder, so also will be the other.

Verse 6.

Fifteenth: not a novice or new at the task. A new believer would not be prepared. To put such a one in a high place of authority would be a danger of temptation to pride, to think himself high and lifted up above his fellows, this pride leads to a fall as happened with the devil himself.

Verse 7.

Sixteenth: his former life must not have been scandalous. This is in relation to those not in the Church. Any former temptations given in to before are called snares of the devil. This opens him to slander and accusations if he gives in to any again.

Finis

I Timothy - Lesson IV

I Timothy 3:8-16. The office of a Deacon. Overseers of the material affairs of a Church.

Qualifications of Deacons

- 8 ¶ Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;
 9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.
 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.
 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.
 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Mystery of Our Religion

- 14 ¶ These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:
 15 but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Verse 8.

A regular one who serves or ministers (deacon). These qualifications are nearly the same as those for bishops: grave = dignified in conversation and conduct; not double tongues = not hypocritical, or deceitful, speaking one thing to one person and something different to a second person; not much wine imbibed = not drunk or beyond gravity or dignified behavior; not greedy = not seeking only personal gain (money).

Verse 9.

Holding the mystery of the faith, the whole Gospel, including specifically the resurrection unto life eternal, the conscience being pure or aware of no offense toward God or other people.

I Timothy - Lesson IV continued

Verse 10.

Let them first be tested according to sincerity and steadiness, as a consistent member for a considerable time, and blameless, or irreproachable. Then they can be put in the office of a deacon.

Verse 11.

Their wives and Christian women in general should have these qualities: be serious, sober, faithful in all things, and have no habit of malicious talk, slander, backbiting, and so on.

Verse 12.

As the bishop: husband of one wife, ruling over their household and children.

Verse 13.

Those deacons who do well in overseeing the material needs of the Church, having proved their steadfastness and diligence, earn the right to minister in holy things, in the doctrines of the Gospel, with great boldness. These could be raised unto the office of elder.

Verse 14.

Only these things he writes since he hopes to see them in a short period of time.

Verse 15.

If he is some way delayed, he writes what he sees as necessary to his correct conduct in God's Church. The assembly of believers which is God's house, as is each believer. Each is a living stone, united in the growing temple in the Lord. The living God is the pillar and ground of all truth.

Verse 16.

Without controversy, by general consent, without dispute: great is the mystery of godliness which Christ manifested in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit by the miracles, and His resurrection from the dead. He was seen by angels who were at His tomb, at His ascension and in heaven.

Then he was preached unto the Gentiles as He was prophesied to Abraham. He was believed on in the world as the Savior of sinners through faith in His holy sacrifice. His resurrected body was taken up into glory in a visible observable manner, retaining the flesh and bones of His human nature, to intercede for us before our Heavenly Father.

I Timothy - Lesson IV continued

I Timothy chapter 4. Apostasy predicted and defined.

Prediction of Apostasy

1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

A Good Minister of Jesus Christ

6 ¶ If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

9 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

10 For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

11 ¶ These things command and teach.

12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Verse 1.

The Spirit speaks very openly. This after high calling and standards Paul defined for those in authority in the Church. The

I Timothy - Lesson IV continued

latter times were those that came after what was their present time. The departing from the faith would effectually cancel the essential truths in the New Testament concerning salvation. Also the adding of other, contrary doctrines, or denying any one or more essential tenets of the Christian faith. Seducing spirits deal in deceit, pretenders of inspiration or immediate messages from God, and false teachers of every kind.

Doctrines of devils would include fallen spirits, demons, speaking for the dead through mediums or seers, those appearing as spectres (like ghosts) or inspired by the devil to draw into evil and destruction. As some have claimed miracles by relics of the saints.

Verse 3.

Other unsavory and false practices included forbidding to marry. Thus priests claim more devotion and a more holy life as single. In the Catholic church, this has led to centuries of sin and abuse. God instituted marriage from the beginning for a purpose and so it should be maintained.

To make it a commandment of God to abstain from certain meats, whether at all times or only during particular times, was contrary to God's original provision.

Verse 4.

It was also a freedom of Christians from all the Jewish laws concerning diet. The true believers know and accept this truth. All creatures that God made for man's food, for proper nourishment, are good and acceptable, and should be used with thanksgiving unto the One Who gave it.

Verse 5.

Thankfulness is made to God by the Word of God and prayer. Thus is it set apart as appropriate by God's provision to be used in this way: in gratitude and moderation. The blessing is in the use of it, and its use in us for service to God by its nourishment. This is the tradition of saying grace before every meal.

Verse 6.

It is a good thing if Timothy shows the fellowship of that or any Church this danger of false, deceitful, and misleading teaching. They are to be on guard against it. This will show that he is a good minister of Christ Jesus. Also that he has been nourished on the words of faith and doctrine. His understanding has matured with his education.

I Timothy - Lesson IV continued

Verse 7.

This appears to be directed against the Judaizers. They were known to relate writing from the Talmud, which were riddled with profane and ridiculous fables. The best path to follow is exercise unto godliness. This alludes to gymnastics exercises as the best and necessary preparation for the contests. Timothy's exercise unto godliness prepared him for the role of a true witness to God's grace and glory, and for the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 8.

Compared to the 'bodily exercise' which Paul labels as only profiting a little (and temporarily). The great contrast is godliness, the practice of which is beneficial to the present life and that which is to come. This is to follow the example of Christ, and receive God's blessing throughout this life. Both the love and peace of God bring peace or serenity which leads to reaching out to others in need and to do the uttermost good. This guarantees the abundant blessing of God, and preparation for that which is to come.

Verse 9.

This teaching is faithful, there need be no doubt. It has been tested and proven. Every believer can put it into practice to also prove its value.

Verse 10.

Because we exercise unto godliness, we suffer reproach and have to labor in this world. Yet, at the same time, we have peace of heart and mind, because we trust in the living God. He has provided salvation for the whole of man, freely offered by His Word and the Spirit. Only those that believe, the elect, respond to the Gospel by faith.

Verse 11.

These things are the true Gospel and must be taught and followed as God's Word records. He saves to the uttermost all those that believe in His Name.

Verse 12.

Even if you are young, your position still demands respect of your elder. Act with gravity and propriety. Your behavior should be the example to the members (the flock). (At about 32 years old, he would still be considered a youth.) If the shepherd strays, so will his sheep follow him. He therefore is responsible for the sheep and must give account unto God.

I Timothy - Lesson IV continued

He must be an example in the following:

- 1) True doctrines - in word
- 2) Conversation - conduct, in all relationships, public and private
- 3) In charity - unselfish love to God and mankind, the attitude and motive of all conduct
- 4) In spirit - the heart and will empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit
- 5) In faith or fidelity - keeping, improving whatever is entrusted to our care
- 6) In purity - keep a chaste body and mind. This is especially for a young man around women, especially young women.

Verse 13.

He is also to continue reading the Scriptures, to himself and to others, then to exhortation, the expounding of the Scripture in public assemblies. This would center around the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament that spoke of Christ. Then the call to faith and a holy life. The truths of the Gospel should continually be preached and taught (doctrine).

Verse 14.

The gift (charisma) - free gift of grace, of the Spirit. This came as a prophetic message when the elders laid hands on him. No further details. He was set apart as evangelist and bishop of the Church at Ephesus. This calling must be exercised and maintained.

Verse 15.

All these things should be frequently thought about (meditate). These convictions guide every aspect of his ministry. To be wholly in these things, he will have no time or opportunity for anything else. This profiting of your labors will be visible to all. This will also bring profit to them, to build up the Church in faith and practice.

Verse 16.

The propounding of the truth of the Gospel, this doctrine, will save him and those that hear him. That purity has power. Continual use brings continual strength, from salvation to growth and maturity in the faith.

I Timothy - Lesson V

I Timothy chapter 5. General directions about different groups in the church.

Responsibilities toward Others

1 Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

2 the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 ¶ Honor widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

9 ¶ Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

10 well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

17 ¶ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.

18 For the Scripture saith,
Thou shalt not muzzle the ox
that treadeth out the corn.

And,

The laborer is worthy of his reward.

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19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

23 ¶ Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

24 ¶ Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

Verse 1.

One advanced in years should be entreated as a father with hesitation and respect, not authoritatively or harshly. Those younger men, speak to as equals, brethren, humbly, within a family.

Verse 2.

Again age deserves respect, as a parent, to the younger women as sisters, again with gentleness and familial concern for their welfare. To keep them pure and faithful is the example and the goal for all members.

Verse 3.

Honor would include supporting those without any means. Those without children or close friends to care for them.

Verse 4.

If the widow has children or nephews, they are first responsible to care for their mother or relative, not the Church. As they supported them when they were young and helpless, so that their supporting a parent is giving back care and honor. This shows piety at home as 'good and acceptable before God' as the 5th Commandment so states.

Verse 5.

The truly alone widow is desolate, having no one to care for her. She has God only, to trust in and pray, with earnest seeking for assistance for her needs (day and night). She trusts that God will provide.

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Verse 6.

The former is contrasted with the woman that lives only for her own indulgence in continual fleshly pleasure (eating, drinking, pampering herself etc.). Their lives have no purpose, totally selfish and earning the penalty of death: 'dead while she liveth'.

Verse 7.

'They' here includes all Church members. All are responsible to follow these guidelines to be without blame.

Verse 8.

Anyone who neglects or refuses to provide for his own kinfolk, and especially any who live under his roof, denies his faith. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves and actively seek their benefit. This should be especially practiced towards those close to us, and those in need. According to natural affection and conscience one cares for his own family. This is common even among the ungodly infidel, to not even do this makes them worse.

Verses 9,10.

Further stipulations concerning the widow, in order for her to be on the list (numbered) of those supported by the Church -

She should be at least 60 years old;

Must have been faithful to her husband;

Have a good reputation for good works that have been reported;

To have brought up children (whether her own or orphans);

Has been hospitable to strangers;

Has shown this common courtesy to those at the end of their journey at their home (washing their feet);

Has also visited and ministered to the sick.

To summarize - those who have continually and diligently sought to practice Christian precepts of helping others in good works to glorify God and follow Christ.

Verse 11.

The younger widows (under 60) should not be included, as very unlikely to continue in that situation. They would most likely have opportunity and temptation to remarry. This would break their previous vows of sole allegiance to Christ as widows.

Verse 12.

Their first vow of fidelity to Christ being broken puts them under condemnation, but not damnation. It is a casting off of 'their first faith' or fidelity.

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Verse 13.

If on the list, they may 'learn to be idle', not working to help provide for themselves. They wander from house to house carrying tales gossiping (tattling) as busybodies. This leads to lies, slander, and backbiting among their fellow believers, only spreading harm and dissension - things which they 'ought not.'

Verse 14.

The better course is for these younger women to marry, bear children, become devoted to domestic concerns. To do thusly gives the 'adversary' or any person no substance for reproach for misconduct or impropriety against Christians.

Verse 15.

Apparently, there had been some occasions of young women acting in a destructive manner (as turning aside after satan).

Verse 16.

If any believer (whether man or woman) have a widow in their family it is best that they take care of them, rather than depend on the Church to do so. They will have burden enough looking after those widows that have no family to care for them.

Verse 17.

Those that hold office as elders, lead the Church (as bishops or presbyters). Those that do so well are worthy of double honor. Most scholars agree that this refers to stipend or compensation. This should be especially so for those who preach and teach, both in public or in private as to new believers.

Verse 18.

Quoting Deuteronomy 25:4, with its application (mentioned in I Corinthians 9:9) directly states the case for wages for time and care spent in ministering in a Church. This is in proper proportion to their labor and necessities of their family.

Verse 19.

be careful about any accusation against an elder. Do not consider it unless it can be proven by two or three witnesses. This follows the Law of Moses. It takes into account that an elder corrects others and can thereby make enemies, thus caution is necessary.

Verse 20.

Sin must be rebuked openly (before all), so that others may be

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warned of its dangers, and that will be rebuked also if judged guilty.

Verse 21.

Paul reminds him that all that he would do is in the sight of God, Jesus His Lord, and the elect angels. The elect angels stood before God, while those that rebelled were disapproved. The whole point is to be impartial. Consider both sides, without regard to a person's office, rank, or any other personal reasons or relationships.

Verse 22.

The laying on of hands was the usual way to set apart a person for an office or place of ministry within a church. This must not be a sudden decision, but only done after careful consideration. This would or could cause a sinner to become a church leader, though unqualified for the work. The one who brought this about would be a 'partaker of other men's sins...'

Verse 23.

It is estimated that Timothy was around 35 years old when he received this letter. He was still considered a young man. Among the Greeks (Timothy's father was Greek), the custom was to abstain from wine as a youth. His health must have been weak, his stomach delicate. But his ministry at Ephesus was important. Clean drinking water was not always available. The juice of the grape, even slightly fermented, was preferable to the danger of impure water.

Verse 24.

Containing the concerns of church officers: those who he did not know needed to be judged about their pre-Christian lives (their sins) before being appointed to any office. Their sins are obvious and generally known (open beforehand). Some men's sins were not so obvious but would be found out after they had been in a church office. Thus the investigation of each one was necessary for the best benefit to the church.

Verse 25.

Likewise, on the positive side, considering a person's good works. Some are open and obvious and well-known. Others do so privately, as their natural behavior and conversation. A little inquiry will be able to bring this fact to light. In each case the best people would be sought for church positions based on diligent ascertaining of the facts.

I Timothy - Lesson VI

I Timothy chapter 6. False Teachers, True Godliness, and the Love of Money.

1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.

¶ These things teach and exhort.

Godliness with Contentment

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into

many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Good Fight of Faith

11 ¶ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only

I Timothy - Lesson VI continued

Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

17 ¶ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

20 ¶ O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

¶ Grace be with thee. Amen.

Verse 1.

The Greek word here 'servants' means slaves, further emphasized by 'under the yoke' as under their master's total control. This circumstance is a converted slaved, under a heathen master. Their Christian behavior is to bring honor to God and their faith, not to bring blasphemy by improper actions. Thus they are to honor their masters. The lawful situation of a person before conversion is not altered by their new faith.

Verse 2.

Even if their master is also converted and they are equal brethren in Christ, they should continue doing them service as fellow partakers in the redemption and salvation in Christ. They then are counted as beloved. Call all to follow these clear directives.

Verse 3.

There obviously were teachers around of another sort, who taught differently. One such teaching was to suggest the converted servant was now equal to his master, and so should be equally served. This sounded good to some and caused disturbances. Their words were 'unwholesome' and disagree with Christ's teaching 'and to the doctrine which is according to godliness'. Wholesome words give nourishment and healing to to the soul, as well as peace, joy, and finally, salvation.

Verse 4.

This person is conceited in what he considers his 'special knowledge'. In fact, he knows nothing of the truth. He raises

I Timothy - Lesson VI continued

continual questions about Mosaic law and the traditions of the elders (Judaizing teachers). 'Strifes of words' points to the idea of splitting hairs, making pointless and empty conclusions. The result is abusing and defaming any that oppose them. They disturbed the peace and caused only evil results, disputes, angry words, envy: all the opposite of Christ's and Paul's teachings.

Verse 5.

Paul goes so far as to label these man as perverse troublemakers, their minds corrupt, not knowing or seeking the truth. They live to dispute: the opposite of the love of God and man. Their motive is material gain and a following only for their own benefit - this they deem as the highest pursuit for man (their version of godliness). Paul's conviction is to stay away from all such persons.

Verse 6.

Godliness, to Paul, is the truth of Christian Faith and practice. Contentment equals sufficiency, having the necessities to support life and this in relationship with the blessings of the Gospel in the soul as a citizen of heaven. This is deemed 'great gain', a true perspective of the reality of human life. This is simply but starkly stated in the following verse.

Verse 7.

We bring nothing with us into this world nor do we carry anything out of it. Period. There is no controversy about this. The Greek poets and philosophers had similar expressions at the time as well.

Verse 8.

To have food and a covering (clothing and a roof overhead) is necessary to support life and be content therewith.

Verse 9.

If not those that are determined to get rich as the highest and most important goal will become tempted to go beyond honesty and then become ensnared in all manner of lusts leading only to evil and destruction. This is described as being like sailors in a storm, violently driven to a rocky shore to be destroyed to pieces, and engulfed - to drown in the waters. The ship they sailed on could be called the pursuit of wealth.

Verse 10.

A verse well-known and well-quoted: the love of money is the root of all evil. This directly relates to all of the evils mentioned

I Timothy - Lesson VI continued

in the preceding verse. For some, their insatiable desire had led them away from the truths of the Christian faith. They have chosen, as it were, to fall into a snare, such as a covered pit full of sharpened stakes, which bring them many torments or sorrows.

Verse 11.

The true man of God must stay away from, even run from, all these things. A man of God must remain close to God, to follow what is right and true, in God's image, dealing fairly with all men. Follow the faith in love, patience, and meekness. Thus one is guided through adversity and temptation.

Verse 12.

As in a contest, fight for the cause of the Gospel, stand for the truth and righteousness, and build up the Church. By these efforts, you 'lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called'. They have been called into the contest. They stood against many opponents and remained faithful (a good profession before many witnesses).

Verse 13.

Paul calls upon Timothy to do something. This is in the sight of God Who gives life to all things, also before Christ Jesus Who confessed His Kingdom was not of this world, before Pontius Pilate, that he would hereafter return in the clouds of Heaven to judge the quick and the dead (John 18:36,37; Mark 14:61,62).

Verse 14.

He is to keep 'this' commandment without spot or blemish - the whole doctrine of the Gospel of Christ and a life 'unrebukable' in conduct according to the truth. This must be passed on to continue in the world unto the appearing of our Lord, both by word and example.

Verse 15.

Christ will appear at the most proper time. The time planned by God, to show forth the only Ruler over all others, over all things, King of kings, and Lord of Lords. These are titles over and above any mortal.

Verse 16.

The only eternal Being is God: inhabiting unapproachable light. No created beings can come near. Incomprehensible to the mind, invisible to the eye. All honor and power are his, everlasting. Amen.

I Timothy - Lesson VI continued

Verse 17.

For those who are blessed with worldly riches, they have equally great responsibility before God. They are not to think of themselves as of greater value because of their wealth. Earthly wealth can quickly vanish - uncertainty is always present. They are neither fixed, guaranteed, or permanent. Only the living God is unchanging and eternal. He blesses His children 'richly', the necessities and comforts, 'all things to enjoy'.

Verse 18.

The best thing they can do is to share their material blessings with those in need. Thus they will be rich in good works. To communicate speaks of equal fellowship with those less fortunate than themselves.

Verse 19.

These actions lay up an account of good works for rewards, in life eternal, by the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ. These works are a testimony and witness - 'a good foundation' of their faith in Christ.

Verses 20,21.

'O Timothy' - Paul calls upon him to carefully follow his directives, a solemn and affectionate charge. He must avoid any profane or worthless conversations that have no spiritual sense or value (vain babblings). This includes those that claim special knowledge or understanding of things. These were related to interpretations of Levitical rites - falsely called inspired. This was in opposition to Christ's sacrifice. This was their error concerning the faith and the truth of the Gospel.

May God's favor and blessings be with thee. Amen seems to have been added later to identify the end of the epistle.

The subscription (information added at the end, under the last part) identifies where it was written, and that it was the first letter to Timothy, from Laodicea, the chief city of the province of Phrygia.

II Timothy - Lesson I

Time: generally agreed upon as written while Paul was imprisoned at Rome the second time, a short period before his execution on June 29, 66 A.D.

Paul addresses Timothy, with great affection and gives an account of Timothy's religious upbringing by mother and grandmother. He is called upon to use the gift of God in him to preach the Gospel.

II Timothy chapter 1.

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 ¶ To Timothy, my dearly beloved son:

¶ Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Be Not Ashamed

3 ¶ I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 ¶ Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began;

10 but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me,

II Timothy - Lesson I continued

in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 ¶ This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygel'lus and Hermog'enes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiph'orus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

17 but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Verse 1.

Paul identifies himself as an apostle - by the authority and personal call of Christ. He was to proclaim the salvation unto eternal life which God had provided, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises. This promise of life was uniquely pertinent to Paul at this time, for his martyrdom under the Roman sentence of death was shortly to be carried out. He knew that to be absent from the body would mean he would be present with the Lord.

Verse 2.

He addresses this letter as he did the first letter to Timothy: his beloved son in the Lord (I Timothy 1:2). He wishes God's grace, mercy, and peace as well as the Son's to be with him continuously.

Verse 3.

Paul traces his serving God from being born a Jew, being raised and educated in knowledge and practice of the true God, which was his heartfelt desire (even when persecuting the Church). He does not forget to continuously remember Timothy every day and night in his prayers. This in spite of lapsing of time, and a great distance away. Nothing is allowed to interfere.

Verse 4.

Paul has great affection in his desire to see him again, even as a father would long to see his only son. The tears express Timothy's likewise desire to see Paul again also. He anticipates the joy of their being reunited.

Verse 5.

Timothy's faith was sincere and pure as Paul remembers his earlier experiences with him. As recorded in Acts 16:1, Paul encounters him at Lystra, son of a Jewess, Lois, and grandson of

II Timothy - Lesson I continued

Eunice. They were converts to Christianity, the grandmother first. They brought Timothy in the faith according to doctrine, but it was Paul who was instrumental in his giving his heart to God. The women had well-prepared the way.

Verse 6.

The gift of the Holy Spirit brought Timothy a particular power of preaching and teaching the Gospel. This was received by Paul's prayer for him with his hands upon him. The idea of stirring up describes the action of stirring up a fire, to add fresh wood to it. This guarantees the fire's heat and continuous burning.

Verse 7.

'The spirit of fear' alludes to the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, with terrifying majesty - the Israelites and Moses trembled with fear. The Gospel was brought in a much milder way, inviting, drawing in by love and forgiveness, with power, and a consciously thinking mind, understanding, and the whole person's thought, will, and actions to be directed by the Holy Spirit unto a godly life.

Verse 8.

The testimony is the Gospel in general - Christ crucified, redemption through His blood. Be not ashamed - as the world judges Jesus as killed as a criminal. Neither be ashamed of Paul, presently in prison for the Gospel of Christ. The greatest honor would be to take part in the persecution against Christians, to suffer for Christ. God's grace and power will sustain him and bring him through.

Verse 9.

The Gospel has called us from all bondage and fear in sin, to forgiveness in the power of the indwelling Spirit to holiness. This is always God's gift to us, never as a result of works, or attempts to earn it. It is always by God's grace and eternal purpose. His calling is holy, and unto holiness, both here and hereafter. This was God's plan before He created the universe and everything in it.

Verse 10.

This planned purpose is now shown forth in the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Death has been conquered for all those that believe. This was accomplished once and for all by the resurrection of Jesus unto eternal life and glory. Thus, through Him and His Gospel, to all that believe, He was the example set, to show forth forever what God the Father has provided and now offers in the Gospel of His Son, blessed forever.

II Timothy - Lesson I continued

Verse 11.

Paul was appointed as one who speaks for for another: a herald, to preach. As an apostle sent directly from God to man. A teacher to instruct, especially to the Gentiles, the doctrines of salvation: forgiveness, and life everlasting through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Verse 12.

He has suffered many things for this cause. This brings him no shame. He is always conscious of Who he has believed and that Christ will continue to bless him with mercy, goodness, and power through everything that he has to face. What he has committed unto Him is not explained in detail. It could be his earthly life to receive it again in the resurrection unto eternal life. It could also be his soul, his earthly life taken away by evil men, but his soul would return to God.

Verse 13.

Timothy is to hold closely onto the outline, the plan, of salvation (sound words) that Paul has taught him. This could be compared to a sketch of a building, in every important detail of the complete structure, prepared for man's welfare for the present and unto eternity. This is truly kept in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faith lives by the truth of the Gospel, and in the Person of Christ at the Father's right hand. Thereby is love given and received in this continual relationship.

Verse 14.

That good thing (again the Gospel of Christ) which Timothy had received is kept by the Holy Spirit that indwells all believers. His power and guidance empowers to holy living and spreading the Words of Life to others.

Verse 15.

Apparently, Paul's second imprisonment at Rome had been a negative influence on some Asian Christians (from what we identify as Asia Minor). They were also visiting Rome at that time. They had 'turned away from' him. This may have been because they felt there was some danger in visiting him or admitting their faith. It may have been known that he was judged and sentenced to death. The two mentioned are not mentioned anywhere else. They may have previously acted as friends and visited him, but now did not. The other Asiatic Christians in Rome also had turned away from him.

II Timothy - Lesson I continued

Verse 16.

An exception, Onesiphorus, was a thankful exception. He and his family had often ministered unto him. He was not deterred by Paul being in jail. Paul continually prays for all of them, for God's mercy in the cause of Christ to be upon them, even as they had shown him kindness as Christian to Christian. They had 'refreshed' him in his time of need.

Verse 17.

This man must have had frequent business in Rome (probably an Ephesian) and when there he had diligently searched out the place of Paul's imprisonment.

Verse 18.

Paul prays for him to 'find mercy of the Lord in that day', presumably the day of judgment after the Rapture, at the Judgment Seat of Christ for rewards. The confirmation of Timothy's knowledge about this man refers back to Paul's time at Ephesus when Onesiphorus (help bringer) also ministered to him when Timothy was also present, and would have many positive memories about.

Next, Chapter 2 - further directions.

II Timothy - Lesson II

II Timothy chapter 2. Further instructions.

A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 ¶ Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel:

9 wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 It is a faithful saying:

For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 if we suffer, we shall also reign with him:

if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful:
he cannot deny himself.

An Approved Workman

14 ¶ Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymene'us and Phile'tus;

18 who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this

II Timothy - Lesson II continued

seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 ¶ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient;

25 in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Verse 1.

Again addressing Timothy as his son in the Lord, Paul calls upon him to be strong in the faith, and the grace, in Christ Jesus. This includes favor, guidance and power to so act according to the Holy Spirit's direction.

Verse 2.

This is based upon the true doctrines that Paul had carefully preached and taught, which Timothy had been present to also hear. As he had been preached to and taught, so also is he now responsible to 'commit to faithful men', who are then to pass on to others also. In other words, to spread the gospel, faithfully, to any who would listen.

Verse 3.

Paul describes the role of the preacher as being like a soldier of Jesus Christ. He therefore will be certain to endure hardship, above that which normal Christians must also experience in this world.

Verse 4.

Preachers (as soldiers for Christ) must keep their loyalty and time focused on their ministry, and not become entangled in 'affairs of this life'. His is spiritual work, devoted to study, continue learning the Scriptures to also continue edifying, encouraging, and

II Timothy - Lesson II continued

building up his congregation.

Verse 5.

Now Paul turns to an athletic contest description. Anyone who enters the race wants to expend all effort to win the prize (the crown). But he must follow all the rules of the contest (strive lawfully). This would translate to a pastor who faithfully preaches the truth of the Gospel, nurtures and builds up the church in faith and practice.

Verse 6.

A fruit-grower must till the ground, trim and prune for better fruit production. So a preacher tends his people. He will then see the fruit of his labor in the growth and maturing of his flock (his crop) unto good works (bearing fruit). Among these works would be toward the benefit of their pastor (as partaker of their fruits). This would also fit the role of the farmer: planting the seed in good soil, looking after the young plants unto maturity, then partaking of the harvest.

Verse 7.

Timothy is called upon to contemplate these different ways of describing a minister's work with his congregation. The Lord will give him the proper understanding of all things having to do with the growth as the prospering of His Church.

Verse 8.

The most important fact that must always be kept in the forefront of all the responsibilities and activities, no matter what the hardships and ultimate end: Jesus Christ, having had a human life as the son of David, also was raised from the dead unto life eternal as the Son of God. This is the true doctrine and fact of Paul's Gospel message. This is the example and guarantee of all believers' future unto eternal life also.

Verse 9.

It is for this Gospel that Paul is in bonds, as if he had done evil by this ministry (from the world's point of view - a rebel and troublemaker). This makes clear his being in prison in Rome the 2nd time. But his being bound does not also bind the spreading and effectiveness of the Word of God.

Verse 10.

For his ministry among the Gentiles that has brought in so many of God's elect he has endured all things completely willingly.

II Timothy - Lesson II continued

Thereby they will also inherit the salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Verse 11.

This is a true doctrine: as Christ died and rose again, so we if we die for Him so also shall we live again as He did, and we will live with Him for eternity.

Verse 12.

Another part of the true doctrine: if we suffer for Him, we will also reign with Him. The opposite is also true: to deny Him here, He will deny us there.

Verse 13.

If we reject Him, He will still be faithful to Himself and those that are His.

Verse 14.

All true doctrines must be repeated as the very Word of God: to be faithful and obedient before the Lord. All important words must be clearly defined and explained. This is essential to avoid the wasting of time and effort, only bringing arguing and general confusion and distraction to those that are hearing it.

Verse 15.

Study is here not limited to books, but making all possible effort, that God would approve your work and there could be no blame upon you. Rightly dividing the word of truth is directing a straight path according to the true doctrines of the Gospel, with no turning aside or distraction.

Verse 16.

These would be the very things he must guard against: to stay on the straight and true path. Profane and vain babblings were the noise of the false teachers which only sidetrack and destroy the truth and godliness.

Verse 17.

Their teaching will effect as a disease will eat the healthy flesh, continue to spread, until corrupting absolutely - even as gangrene. Two individuals are infecting (or attempting to) by their teaching - Hymenaeus and Philetus.

Verse 18.

They have left the truth for a lie. They had been teaching that

II Timothy - Lesson II continued

the bodily resurrection of the saints had already past as final, as not to ever happen again. They denied any future resurrection, future rewards, and punishments. It was confusing and distracting from the faith of hope of some who listened to them.

Verse 19.

The Gospel of Christ stands as sure as a great building, on a permanent foundation. This foundation is that of God Almighty, inscribed with His seal, 'The Lord provides for them that are His.' Those that are His must avoid every appearance of iniquity.

Verse 20.

Continuing the comparison of a great house to the Church. In a house would be containers for a great variety of uses - gold and silver, to earthen - the range from beautiful, honorable, to hold flowers or wine, of wood and earth, more earthly and utilitarian purposes. So in a Church would be workers, from preachers and teachers, eminent, holy, sincere, spiritually mature, as well as others with worldly skills and uses. Those who are dishonorable would be the lowest kind, busybodies, false teachers and so on.

Verse 21.

The proper vessel, to be honorable, for the master's use must be set apart, clean and ready to be used for every good work. So also a servant in a Church. A person must be dedicated and set apart from everything contrary, whether false doctrine or questionable and fleshly habits. These must be purged from one's life to be best used of God.

Verse 22.

A pure heart is his high-calling. To call on the Lord, pride, ambition, and lust of power and worldly success must be put aside. This as well as the sensual pleasures of a young person's lust. The highest path is to go after righteousness, faith, unselfish love (charity, agape love), and peace. All of these toward God and man, especially toward members of the Church: those that call on the Lord in faith, 'out of a pure heart'.

Verse 23.

Avoid all foolish and ignorant questions - which only lead to strife: arguments and a pointless waste of time and effort.

Verse 24.

Strife is the enemy of one who serves God. Gentleness and patience with an edifying attitude and spirit seeks to teach the

II Timothy - Lesson II continued

truth in that friendly and loving manner. That God's servant reflects the manner of His Lord.

Verse 25.

Only in a gentle manner is the way to instruct those that oppose the truth. To oppose themselves suggest that they do themselves harm in this refusal to acknowledge and follow the truth. The best outcome is if God in His providence gives them repentance, a turning away from their former opposition to the truth. They were still in reach of God's mercy.

Verse 26.

The snare of the devil is to tempt them with pride and special knowledge, thus to oppose the true believers and the Word of God. This is his way of leading those that would push themselves forward and desire a following for their own benefit. Only a strong and meekly delivered dose of the Gospel of Christ can bring them to their senses. Thus, they recover from the infection of false and spurious doctrine. This is the best outcome for them and for the Church, to be unified and at peace.

II Timothy - Lesson III

II Timothy chapter 3. Dangerous Latter Days: Persecution and Suffering.

The Character of Men in the Last Days

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
3 without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
4 traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
5 having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
7 ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.
9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

Paul's Last Charge to Timothy

10 ¶ But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,
11 persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at An'ti-och, at Ico'ni-um, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.
12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.
14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;
15 and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
17 that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

II Timothy - Lesson III continued

Verse 1.

These last days appear to most directly apply to the time after Christ's days on earth to purchase believers' salvation by His death. From that event, the 'last days' began. It may also include in this immediate context the last days of the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel. This would extend to the time before Christ's Second Coming to earth. The times in either and every case shall be perilous. The Times of the Gentiles.

Verse 2.

Characteristics of the times shall include the most selfish attitudes and actions. Everyone's own welfare was the essential concern. To covet majors in wanting wealth. Pride and position brings great boasting, putting one's self far above all others. Blasphemers add speaking against God and sacred and righteous things and people. Those who refuse to obey their parents, being self-willed, beyond direction and persuasion. Having also no gratitude, as if they deserved or were naturally worthy of being given to and taken care of. No obligation and no giving of thanks. Unholy speaks of not respecting or giving reverence to God.

Verse 3.

The natural affection of parents toward children and vice versa. To not have this is worse than animals, which show natural affection to their young. Truce-breakers are liars of the worst kind - making promises they never intend to keep. False accusers, liars who purpose is to ruin and destroy lives. Incontinent - those having no control over their baser appetites. Fierce - wild, impetuous, lacking all gentleness and restraint. Despisers of the good - those that despise people who are opposite to them.

Verse 4.

Traitors - give to the enemy those that are faithful. Heady - rash, hot-headed. High-minded - prideful, seeking their own benefit, full of themselves. Lovers of pleasures, rather than God. They live to experience sensual lusts of the flesh above all things. God is the last thing they would ever think of.

Verse 5.

Having the form of godliness - a behavior and even conversation of the letter without the indwelling Spirit. The outward appearance without the inward power. These people only understand the outward forms, thinking that thereby they are working for their salvation. They miss the whole point of sin, God's grace, and the sacrifices of Christ. Timothy must purposely avoid them. They deceive themselves

II Timothy - Lesson III continued

and will attempt to deceive any who associate with them.

Verse 6.

False teachers. This sort of person will seek to influence the weakest and most vulnerable ones to their way of thinking and acting. Paul describes them as 'silly women laden with sins', including various lusts. They are easy prey, hungry for any personal attention. They respond too willingly to please these men and follow their pious sounding impurities. They will follow their Jewish restrictions and false teaching.

Verse 7.

These false teachers think, in their continual learning by arguing, they were arriving at the truth. They considered this a 'form of godliness' yet were actually going in the opposite direction of the saving knowledge of the Salvation in the Gospel of Christ.

Verse 8.

James and Jambres were two of the magicians that stood against Moses in Egypt (mentioned in the Targum) in Exodus. They were like the present false teachers in their corrupt thinking, resisting the truth which Paul preached and taught. They had never arrived at the truth, and never accepted it by faith.

Verse 9.

These false teachers will never overcome or overwhelm the truth of God in His Word. His Word will stand and their folly will be plainly seen by all who observe these things. So it was with those that withstood Moses. When the Bible is available to all, false doctrine will be recognized for its deceitfulness.

Verse 10.

Paul asks him to consider his statements of Christian doctrine, and his manner of living - don't his beliefs and life coincide? What he believes he also lives: the whole purpose, his singular and strong faith, this through many sufferings, but maintaining unselfish love toward others, with patience.

Verse 11.

Also, he suffered persecutions, afflictions, at various places. None of this could be said concerning the false teachers. The particular persecutions he lists by city as the most serious and memorable.

Paul and Barnabas were expelled from Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:16-43). At Iconium, they were stoned by Jews and Gentiles. They

II Timothy - Lesson III continued

fled to Lystra where Jews caused a mob to stone Paul outside of the city. He was miraculously restored and went onto Derbe (Acts 13:50,51; 14:5,6 and 19-21). Through these he endured and the Lord delivered him out of them all.

Verse 12.

To live godly in Christ Jesus, all 'shall suffer persecution.' Those who live for the world, pursuing all greed, lust, and pride will be in conflict with the true Christian, whose light reveals their darkness. Persecution takes many forms in different times, but with the same goal: to dim, put aside, or even snuff out the light to hide their evil, their utter selfishness and pride.

Verse 13.

Evil people and pretenders will draw people into their false practices and promises. They, in deceiving others, are deceiving themselves. For a season they will continue to get worse and worse.

Verse 14.

Paul here emphasizes the great difference of the Christian. Here Timothy is charged to hold on continually to those things that he has been taught - the very truths of God, delivered directly to him by his father in the Lord - Paul himself.

Verse 15.

Paul also reminds him of his upbringing in the Old Testament Scriptures wherein is the foundation of the coming and mission of Christ, in the Law and the prophets, the rituals and sacrifices. If one has faith in Christ, these Scriptures reveal the wisdom and eternal plan of God to provide for man's salvation through Him in the fulness of time.

Verse 16.

The writings of the Old Testament came by Divine inspiration. They are the Holy Scriptures (the New Testament not having been collected or complete at this time). The subject of the message came from God with guidance according to the language and style of writing of the individual authors. This is seen in the variety of the writings.

It is profitable for doctrine: the will of God, and the promises, prophecies, and rites that pointed to Christ.

For reproof: to correct and convince people of the truth.

For correction: to put things in their proper uses and places - the straight path and way of speech and action.

Instruction in righteousness: to teach new believers in the ways

II Timothy - Lesson III continued

of godly behavior, thinking, conversations, and action.

Verse 17.

The man of God: he who speaks for God, his servant, preacher, minister of the Gospel. He must be completely fitted for his task, so thoroughly prepared to teach, preach, correct, encourage and be an example by his good works. This is the goal: to be as perfect as is possible for any individual to attain for the glory of God.

II Timothy - Lesson IV

II Timothy chapter 4. Paul charges Timothy.

Timothy is further charged to continual and faithful diligence in his ministry. Paul predicts his own nearing death.

1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 ¶ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Personal Instructions

9 ¶ Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

10 for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessaloni'ca; Crescens to Galatia, unto Dalma'tia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tych'icus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloak that I left at Tro'as with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will

II Timothy - Lesson IV continued

preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

19 ¶ Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiph'orus.

20 Eras'tus abode at Corinth: but Troph'imus have I left at Mile'tus sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubu'lus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 ¶ The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Verse 1.

Paul charges Timothy before God and the Lord, Who will judge the dead and those still alive. They are his witnesses to what he calls on Timothy to measure up to in his ministry.

Verse 2.

Preach the word, the doctrine, the truth of Christ crucified for the sins of the world, both Jews and Gentiles, equally, by faith in Christ. Do this no matter what the time or circumstances, good or bad. Use any opportunity. Correct the false ones, rebuke those that continue in public sins, comfort the weak. This must be done patiently, teaching each sort in ways suitable to their need and understanding.

Verse 3.

Paul predicts the time certainly will come when people will not endure the plain, true, practical doctrines of the Gospel. They will seek out those that speak about what their lusts desire. They will call on one after the other, to flatter them and entertain them. Itching ears describes endless curiosity for variety.

Verse 4.

The truth they avoid because it would demand them to turn from their vices, to turn from sin and darkness. In this turning away from the truth, they will accept and follow the most degrading nonsense (fables).

Verse 5.

To prevent any such temptations one must be vigilant, keeping watching and praying always. Don't allow afflictions or fear of them slow you down or distract you. Preach Christ and His crucifixion, the forgiveness of sin, salvation, the gift of God by grace to all that believe. Timothy must continue performing all of the tasks of the

II Timothy - Lesson IV continued

ministry of Christ, faithfully. God will surely bless his efforts.

Verse 6.

Paul describes himself as ready for his upcoming execution as an offering. He is being sacrificed, his blood to be as a libation as what was poured on the sacrifice. This was also the time of his leaving this life, this world, a departure to another location. This could only be expressed in this final form if he knew his death sentence was to be carried out in a short time.

Verse 7.

He has put forth all effort in the struggle as in a sporting contest. He finished the event of his life as an apostle of Christ - reaching for the prize. He has labored lawfully. He has kept the faith and looks for the reward.

Verse 8.

A crown of righteousness is set aside as a reward for those faithful to God's grace - promised to Paul and all those that love His appearing. The Lord Jesus is the righteous Judge Who declares the victorious and gives the crown, at the day of judgment. This is for all those who live in anxious anticipation with joy. Their hope is not tied to the earth or anything it offers, but with Christ and His calling them to be with Him.

Verse 9.

Paul expresses his most earnest desire to have Timothy with him at these last moments of his life. He also expresses his disappointment that most of his companions have departed.

Verse 10.

Demas was mentioned as being with him at his first Roman imprisonment in Colossians 4:14. Apparently he had sought a better place to be at this time, as a less-persecuted Jew at Thessalonica. The two others mentioned most likely went on to churches to continue in preaching and teaching and building them up in the faith.

Verse 11.

Luke was still with him. It is assumed that he remained with Paul until the end. He asks Timothy to bring Mark with him to minister to him at this time, his being closely guarded at this time.

Verse 12.

Tychicus was mentioned in Acts 20:4 and Ephesians 6:21. He was a faithful companion. Paul is sending him to Ephesus, most likely as

II Timothy - Lesson IV continued

bearer of this letter, and as a relief to take over Timothy's ministry in that city.

Verse 13.

The word 'cloak' is translated by some as travel bag. What 'books' these were is not known. The parchments most likely were Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament). His own writings could have been among the 'books'. These he would most likely give to be used and preserved by the Church.

Verse 14.

Alexander 'coppersmith' may be the one mentioned. No detail concerning the harm he had done to Paul. He could have been among those false witnesses that contributed to Paul's condemnation. Paul simply states that the Lord will see that he will receive what his evil work earned him.

Verse 15.

Apparently, this man traveled around speaking against the Gospel and Christians. Timothy is warned to stay away from him. He was most likely one of the Judaizers that Paul had often encountered.

Verse 16.

At this time, Christians were being persecuted under Nero's rule. When Paul gave his defense of his faith and life, there was no one who stood with him. All 'forsook' him. Paul prays that this will not be held against them at the time of judgment.

Verse 17.

Human help had not stayed with him. People had let him down but God had strengthened him, and stayed with him throughout. This strength had helped to bravely preach the Gospel for all to hear, and especially to these Gentiles. Some were blessed, others became decidedly more hostile, since he spoke against their traditional deities. He was protected from this mob who sought to harm him (they were the lion ready to pounce upon him).

Verse 18.

No evil designs can prevent him from remaining faithful. The Lord will deliver him unto His heavenly kingdom. He may lose his present earthly life but God's glory includes what He has done and what He is yet to do. He will bring to pass His promises. His glory is eternal. Amen.

II Timothy - Lesson IV continued

Verse 19.

Prisca is most likely the short form or nickname for Priscilla - as mentioned with her husband Aquila in Acts 18:18,26. Give them greetings from Paul. Also, the household of Onesiphorus (assuming his death). His family was still in Ephesus.

Verse 20.

Erastus stayed at Corinth. Romans 16:23 mentions that he was treasurer of that city. Trophimus was left at Miletum, suffering an illness. This was near Ephesus. He was mentioned in Acts 20:4 as part of the group carrying the churches' offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem. No further details are given about his illness.

Verse 21.

Paul requests he come before winter, when sea travel was dangerous. It is not known if Timothy did see Paul before he was put to death. These other persons named are otherwise unknown. They were apparently Roman Christians that visited Paul, as well as all the other brethren that visited him there.

Verse 22.

Paul addresses this prayer to Christ, asking that He be with the spirits of the believers as well as his own. This is addressed to the whole church. He asks God's grace to continue to be with them. Amen closes the letter.

The addendum identifies this letter as the second to Timothy (first bishop of the Ephesus Church). It was written from Rome, during the time he was brought before Nero the second time. This letter is considered by most critics to have been written in around 65 or 66 A.D, a short time before Paul was put to death.

Titus - Lesson I

Introduction.

Paul's frequent companion.

He was not mentioned in the Book of Acts. He was Greek by birth (Galatians 2:3), uncircumcised, and converted to the faith by Paul's preaching (1:4). He is mentioned in II Corinthians 2:13, as comforting Paul with news of the Corinthian Church's warm welcome to Titus, which refreshed his spirit and Paul's also (II Corinthians 7:6,7,13,15).

Titus was left in charge of the churches in Crete about 62 A.D. No mention of his leaving Crete, or where or how he died.

The directions given primarily repeat the charges given to Timothy, as to how to preside over Churches in Paul's absence, especially in appointing officers. Also, in watching out for corruption and distractions.

Paul opens with a statement of his character, his faith in God's truth in Christ unto eternal life.

Titus chapter 1.

Salutation

1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

2 in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

3 but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

4 ¶ To Titus, mine own son after the common faith:

¶ Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Qualifications of Elders and Bishops

5 ¶ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

6 if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

Titus - Lesson I continued

9 holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

14 not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Verse 1.

Uniquely, Paul here calls himself servant of God, apostle of Jesus Christ, to build up the faith of the elect that accept the truth. That truth promotes a holy and useful, loving, giving life.

Verse 2.

What God has promised, He will certainly bring to pass, from before creation, unto eternity, according to His absolute, truthful nature. This was revealed through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and the gift of salvation through Him.

Verse 3.

According to God's perfect timing, Jesus showed forth the promises of God as recorded in His word concerning the Gospel, the doctrine of salvation. Paul was called upon to preach this Gospel unto the Gentiles by Christ Himself. This commission was given by 'God our Savior', Christ, the second Person of the Trinity. Thus the brilliant light of God's eternal love shines forth in the world.

Verse 4.

Titus is addressed (even as Timothy) as his son in the Lord (his conversion under Paul's preaching, and personal instruction). He is greeted with the most beneficial wishes of God's blessings upon him - 'Grace, mercy, and peace' from the Father and our Savior.

Titus - Lesson I continued

Verse 5.

Paul's visit is not mentioned anywhere else. It is therefore assumed that it took place after the period recorded in Acts. This leaves the time as after his first Roman imprisonment. Paul had left Titus there for this particular purpose - to set the Church in order. Paul apparently had to leave before he could do this, but was confident that Titus could. Every city that had a Church planted, upon the whole island, was to be organized correctly. The island was celebrated as having 100 cities (the Hekatompylos). The question remains as to how many cities Paul had visited, preached in, and planted Churches.

In addition to organization, elders were also to be set apart, appointed, to oversee the spiritual nurturing and maturing of the congregation. They must be well educated in doctrine, and mature in godly living to be examples and enforce discipline as well. At this time the terms 'elder' and 'bishop' were the same order or office (verse 7), but later became different, distinct offices.

Verses 6-9.

The list of criteria for elders (see also I Timothy 3).

Verses 6,7.

Without blame - one wife, obedient children. Not always wanting his own way, but seeking God's will. Not irritable, a heavy drinker, is not violent or abusive, does not love money, is not greedy or dishonest.

Verse 8.

A welcoming person, opening his home to strangers, regardless of social position or economic status. One who loves goodness in people and goodness in general. Sober equals prudence, thoughtfulness. Just is honest and fair. Holy is pure in heart. Temperate is moderate in all things, never demanding, but self-denying.

Verse 9.

This person must hold fast to the true Christian doctrine, keeping the same instructions and forms, the confession of faith as delivered by Paul. It is only on this basis that others are to be called to and convinced of the truth. This brings cooperation from those who were previously not settled and certain.

Verse 10.

This is necessary because of the various false teachers, especially the Judaizers (of the circumcision). False teachers are boastful, claiming special knowledge, speaking only to argue and

Titus - Lesson I continued

deceive, not interested in finding the truth. They only waste time and lead others astray, with agitation.

Verse 11.

They must be exposed and stopped. They seek a following for their own benefit, looking for a hand-out (filthy lucre). Whole families are being led astray with their false doctrine - subverting the salvation by grace through Christ with works of the Law.

Verse 12.

Epimenides, also a Cretan (from the island of Crete), was acknowledged as a prophet, as well as a highly renowned wise man and poet. He had spoken of his fellow countrymen as always being liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. This was 600 years before Paul's time.

Verse 13.

Apparently, this general description was still common (this witness is true). Therefore, these people must be treated sternly, not allowed to be variable or lazy, but soundly maintained in the faith, and live a holy and beneficial life.

Verse 14.

Give no heed to Jewish traditions and conjecture, from generations of scribes and Pharisees that added to Scripture. They only lead away from the truth.

Verse 15.

A Christian considers all meat clean to eat and nourish (as in Luke 11:39-41). To the unbeliever, their ideas of scruples concerning such things are defiled - thinking they please God by works. However, their ideas and common thoughts seek only their own benefit, making a show, but without conscience - they are impure and unholy.

Verse 16.

These Jews claim that only they know God. Other people could not know God except through them. Thus they were proud and intolerant, their actions of the same sort - abominable, disobedient, reprobate. Compared to a coin that is counterfeit - claiming to be valuable, but without correct weight, metal, or official stamping - worthless. They have no interest, and therefore do nothing good, nothing to benefit anyone but themselves - the opposite of the goodness, love, mercy, and grace of God.

Finis.

Titus - Lesson II

Titus chapter 2.

The Teaching of Sound Doctrine

- 1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:
- 2 that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.
- 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
- 4 that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,
- 5 to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
- 6 Young men likewise exhort to be soberminded.
- 7 In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,
- 8 sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.
- 9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;
- 10 not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.
- 11 ¶ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
- 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
- 13 looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
- 14 who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
- 15 ¶ These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Verse 1.

From the preceding chapter's description of the Judaizing teachers, Titus is called upon to act exactly the opposite. He must speak the truth and live by it, provide instruction and the example of following it.

Verse 2.

Those advanced in years must be sober, serious, moderate, sound in faith, patient, and do good.

Titus - Lesson II continued

Verse 3.

Elderly women should also be of the same mettle - holy, temperate in drink, teachers of good practices as appropriate to believers, and not of the world.

Verse 4.

By their godly example they must show and teach the younger women to be sober, faithful to their husband and loving to him and their children.

Verse 5.

They must keep a good home, and obey their husbands. They are not to engage in idle gossip or minding other people's business. They are to be good as honoring to God and His Word in all things.

Verse 6.

Young men are to be sternly encouraged to be 'sober-minded', not seeking fleshly pleasures.

Verse 7.

He is called upon to set the correct example as to good works. In doctrine, keep strictly to the truth without mixture, in clarity, depth, power, and fulness.

Verse 8.

Sound, healthy, invigorating words of the Gospel are essential for healing. This will put any who use false or misleading ideas (including Judaizers) to shame, therefore unable to speak any evil against you or criticize you.

Verse 9.

Servants should be obedient to their masters, not talking back or contradicting, but to 'please them in all things'.

Verse 10.

They must not steal, sell, or waste their master's goods. It was common among the heathens that slaves were known as thieves. The believing slave must not do this but show honor to God our Savior by honesty and fidelity to their master. This thereby exemplifies the truth and value of the doctrine the truth of the Gospel 'in all things'.

Verse 11.

The greatness of the grace of God is now shown forth for all to observe. It is the greatest gift from God's loving mercy, the

Titus - Lesson II continued

sacrifice of Jesus Christ for all man's sins. This is preached to all who are willing to listen.

Verse 12.

We are instructed as God's children through Christ, to learn of Him, to grow and mature to become more and more like Him. Things of the world and its lusts and anything ungodly must be denied, and avoided. These lusts include the normal list of all those things done to excess - eating, drinking, anger, slander, sexual things, love of money, power, and fame. All things must be moderate, proper, serious, sober, honest, just. This is summed up in the words righteous and godly.

In this present world, even considering that all things will be cleansed in the world to come - we are to live to be serious and mature in ourselves, honest and just to our neighbor, and show honor, respect, and thankfulness to our Heavenly Father.

Verse 13.

All this we do in our time here, while awaiting 'that blessed hope and glorious appearing' of Christ. This promise is full of peace, love, and joy. At His appearing, believers will be transformed like unto His glory, the resurrection of the body, the eternal glorification.

Verse 14.

Christ gave His own life to redeem us. He paid the ransom, setting us free, who were formerly slaves to sin, under the penalty of death. Through His Spirit, we are cleansed and in thankful response, are zealous of doing good works, following His example, and serve Him - an honorable response. This sets us apart as different, 'peculiar', contrasted with the selfish and sinful, worldly ones.

Verse 15.

Teach these things - urge believers to pay close attention and awaken their consciences. Explain (rebuke) their necessity as God's requirement. Do all this according to your God-given, ordained authority. Do all this in the proper, serious, and knowledgeable manner and spirit as is proper, as God's representative - therefore no man will have any occasion to belittle or reject your office.

Titus - Lesson II continued

Titus chapter 3.

Be Careful to Maintain Good Works

1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,
2 to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
7 that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 ¶ This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject;

11 knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Personal Instructions

12 ¶ When I shall send Ar'temas unto thee, or Tych'icus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicop'olis: for I have determined there to winter.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apol'los on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Benediction

15 ¶ All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith.

¶ Grace be with you all. Amen.

Titus - Lesson II continued

Verse 1.

Remind them of the necessity of being subject to the civil government and following its laws - the Roman authorities in this case - whatever their rank or office (principalities, powers, magistrates). Obeying the law is the basest moral behavior. It must be surpassed - not doing bad is not enough. 'Be ready to every good work', against such there is no law. (See also Romans 13:1-7.)

Verse 2.

This must include controlling one's speech concerning others. Do not speak evil or to injure a person. Do not instigate any disturbance or arguments that could lead to fighting (brawlers). We must set the opposite example - be gentle and meek toward (unto) 'all men'.

Verse 3.

All of us, before accepting Christ, were thus, whether Jew or Gentile. We acted without truly understanding God, His purpose, providence, or grace. We were disobedient, hard-headed, seeking only our own way. Not choosing or seeing the truth (deceived). This kept us serving the values of the world according to satisfying the fleshly desires and pleasures of any and every kind. This included being hateful, wanting to do harm, wanting what others possessed, being totally selfish and self-centered. All others are competition and must be pushed aside, put down, and made less, as if worthless.

Verse 4.

This is not the end of the story. It came to pass that we experienced the essential goodness and love of our creator. Our Savior appeared among mankind. This was in the life and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

Verse 5.

No system of works, even the Mosaic Law, that was righteous, could earn salvation. Only God's mercy saved us by faith, His gift to us. Then, we were admitted unto the Church by baptism, and renewed and cleansed unto good works by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Verse 6.

The Holy Spirit was poured upon us without measure: in abundance through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Verse 7.

We are accounted righteous by His grace, justified (made just), to be prepared as God's children for eternal glory. Our hope is based

Titus - Lesson II continued

upon the resurrection of Christ. We are joint heirs in putting on immortality unto eternal life.

Verse 8.

This is a truthful statement, trustworthy, which will be brought to pass. Titus is called upon to continue to teach, to affirm 'these things'. This will encourage and exhort them that believe to continue in good works unto God's glory. These things are only positive and beneficial, and upbuilding to others.

Verse 9.

Warning: to be avoided - wasting time and effort in foolish arguments about heritage, benefits of the law, anything that distracts or deceives one from the truth of God in Christ. They are only empty and without any benefit, therefore negative and destructive.

Verse 10.

A heretic is a person who hangs on to a false opinion. The most common example is one who hangs on to the idea of works as part of salvation. Titus is asked to attempt to show such a person the truth, to convince them of their error. Twice is enough. If they still reject the truth, they are to be rejected, shunned.

Verse 11.

Such a person has turned away from the Gospel of salvation. His path only leads to sinning and destruction. This also suggests that his motive was to get money, not even believing in his own spiel. He, therefore, condemns himself.

Verse 12.

These two men were elders or deacons that Paul planned to send to Crete to take the place of Titus. This is the only time that Artemas is mentioned. Tychicus was from Asia, mentioned in Acts 20:4. Nicopolis is supposed to be near Actium. He planned to spend the winter there, so he was obviously free at this time.

Verse 13.

Zenas (only mentioned here) and Apollos are to be provided with all help that they may need as traveling evangelists. Apollos is mentioned in Acts 18:24; I Corinthians 1:12; 3:5,6; 14:6.

Verse 14.

Paul requests that the Christians are to be instructed to be continually doing good, helping others, especially fellow Christians

Titus - Lesson II continued

in need. They must not be idle or self-indulgent, but be fruitful.

Verse 15.

All of his companions also salute him, wish him well, and wish to be remembered by all the brethren with love in the faith. May divine favor (Grace) be with them all. 'Amen' ends the letter.

There are various subscriptions, mentioning this as to Titus, written from Nicopolis.

Philemon

Introduction.

When this letter was sent, Philemon was staying in Colosse, probably born there. He became a believer through Paul's preaching. He hosted a Church in his house, was generous in works of charity and hosted Christians that came to his city.

The reason for this letter was regarding a slave named Onesimus, who had run away from his owner, Philemon, and came to Paul at Rome (his first imprisonment - see Acts 28:16,23). He was converted under Paul, and served him affectionately. He also told Paul of his circumstance and his desire to do the right thing and return to his master. Paul realized this was proper and necessary and wrote this letter on Onesimus' behalf to smooth the way and witness his conversion to Christianity as sincere. Any wrong should be put on Paul's account. Onesimus as well as Tychicus are thought to have this letter as well as that to the Colossians, to deliver together in 62 A.D., both having been written at the same time.

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon.

Salutation

1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother,
 ¶ Unto Phile'mon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer,
 2 and to our beloved Ap'phi-a, and Archip'pus our fellow soldier,
 and to the church in thy house:
 3 ¶ Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord
 Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

4 ¶ I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,
 5 hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord
 Jesus, and toward all saints;
 6 that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the
 acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.
 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the
 bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Paul Pleads for Onesimus

8 ¶ Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin
 thee that which is convenient,
 9 yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such a one as
 Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.
 10 I beseech thee for my son Ones'imus, whom I have begotten in my
 bonds:
 11 which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable
 to thee and to me:
 12 whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is,
 mine own bowels:
 13 whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might
 have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:
 14 but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should
 not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.
 15 ¶ For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou

Philemon continued

shouldest receive him for ever;

16 not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 ¶ Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Final Greetings

23 ¶ There salute thee Ep'aphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus;

24 Mark, Aristar'chus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

25 ¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Verse 1.

Paul identifies himself as a prisoner (his arm was bound with a chain, to that of a soldier) for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Timothy, their Christian brother, also greets Philemon as dearly beloved, fellow laborer.

Verse 2.

Also greeted are Apphia (assumed to beloved sister), Archippus (a name meaning master of the horse), identified as fellow soldier. Apphia is assumed to be Philemon's wife, and Archippus is assumed to be their son. The Church in their house is greeted, the normal place of believers' get togethers at this time.

Verse 3.

The best greeting - grace and peace, from the Father and the Son.

Verse 4.

Paul always mentions him in his prayers and expresses thankfulness.

Verse 5.

This for what he has been told of Philemon's love toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints. Also, his strong faith.

Verse 6.

His faith in Christ was communicated by his works of love toward fellow believers, those in poorer circumstances. This is an effective example to others of his devotion to Christ Jesus.

Philemon continued

Verse 7.

Paul further expresses 'great joy and consolation' in his works of generous love towards the saints. They are 'refreshed' brethren.

Verse 8.

Paul says he has much authority through Christ to command him to do what is proper.

Verses 9,10.

He asks him with sincere desire as an older person, and also a prisoner of Christ. All this is focused on behalf of his son in the Lord, Onesimus. He had come to Paul in Rome and was converted by him.

Verse 11.

Paul describes the past role of this man as opposite of the meaning of his name: 'help bringer'. He had previously been unprofitable, or not helpful, to the point of actually running away from him. Now there is a change to the opposite - now profitable as a believer in Christ, to both of them.

Verse 12.

Though now a fellow Christian, this man still was legally bound to Philemon. Paul was doing the lawful and just thing in sending him back to his master. Onesimus was also bound to agree. Paul asks Philemon to receive him as if receiving his own heart, such was his own deep affection.

Verse 13.

He would have kept Onesimus with him, to continue to help him as he was in bonds, instead of Philemon (who also was Paul's spiritual son). Thus Philemon had every reason to forgive Onesimus and allow him to stay, to continue ministering to Paul's needs.

Verse 14.

But Paul does not want to do this without knowing what Philemon thinks about it. It must be by Philemon's own choice, not because Paul demanded it. By sending him back, Philemon could make the choice to send him to Paul again, as a gift of service.

Verse 15.

Paul sees the situation as directed by God for everyone's benefit. Onesimus had left Philemon's house as an unfaithful slave for a short time. God, by His grace, has changed him into a brother in the Lord. Onesimus will return to Philemon a new and faithful servant, and this forever, but equal before God.

Verse 16.

Paul asks him to treat Onesimus as a beloved brother, as he has been toward Paul, but now also to Philemon. In the flesh, Onesimus was a part of his family, part of his property. In the Lord, he was part of the heavenly family, and of the Church that met at Philemon's house. Thus closer and more valuable to him than to Paul.

Philemon continued

Verse 17.

As we are close as friends, brethren in the faith, receive him as you would receive me.

Verse 18.

Paul offers to pay anything that Onesimus owes him, or right any wrong done.

Verse 19.

Paul clearly claims his own hand has written this letter. Therefore, Philemon must accept his words as sincere - he will repay. Paul will make no claim as to what Philemon owes him for his conversion.

Verse 20.

Paul requests Philemon to bring him joy in the Lord by granting his request. He will be refreshed in his heart by such a kindness, which will, at the same time, be a spiritual and temporal benefit to Philemon.

Verse 21.

Paul has all confidence in him to oblige him, but also that he will do more than Paul has suggested. This may suggest that Philemon will give freedom to Onesimus, as now a brother in Christ, both having received Jesus under the preaching and instruction of Paul.

Verse 22.

It is most likely that this request indicates that it is a short time before Paul's release from his first time in Roman bondage. He expects that their prayers at the Colossian Church will bring him to them. His faith is so strong as to already request that a room be set aside and ready for his soon to come visit.

Verse 23.

Epaphrus was a Colossian (see Colossians 4:2). He must have been imprisoned for the Gospel as well, at some point. Paul sends him warm greetings.

Verse 24.

Also greeted are Mark, Aristar'chus, Demas, and Luke. They were most likely known by Philemon and also Colossians. Marcus may have been John Mark (Acts 12:12). Aristarchus was the one mentioned in Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2. Demas (mentioned in II Timothy 4:10) was the one who left Paul only after Paul's 2nd imprisonment. Lucas is assumed to be Luke (author of Acts and his own account of the Gospel). All are recognized as 'fellow laborers' in the Lord's work.

Verse 25.

This general prayer, in effect, is to not only Philemon. It is also to the others mentioned by name, as well as the whole congregation of that city that met in Philemon's house. 'Amen' closes the prayer.

Philemon continued

The subscription mentions it being written by Onesimus for Paul, from Rome to Philemon.

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We would all like to thank God for His Word and His small, still voice in the lonely hours.